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Marchers at Auschwitz: 'We came here to cry'

News agencies

OSWIECIM, Poland – Led by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, over 7,000 Jews from around the world retraced the three-kilometer journey from Auschwitz to the gas chambers at Birkenau.

Flanked by his Polish counterpart Jerzy Buzek, he walked under the notorious metal gate of Auschwitz at the head of this year's March of the Living, comprising some 6,500 young people and 1,000 Holocaust survivors.

"We are here together, young and old. We came here to cry," Labor MK Shevah Weiss said before the march.

Netanyahu, the first prime minister to participate in the march, told the gathering that Israel's creation has ensured the survival of Jews.

"This is the lesson of the Holocaust, this and only this: That the existence of the Jewish people is tied to Jewish sovereignty and a Jewish army that rests on the strength of Jewish faith," Netanyahu said.

"Here, right here, they tore the babies from their mothers' arms and threw them into the ovens," he said at Birkenau. "You can almost hear the mothers' cries rising from the ground and you can feel the paralyzing fear of the children."

Netanyahu began his speech by wrapping himself in a talit and reciting the *Shema*.

"Despite everything and after everything, in the war between the Nazi evil and the Jewish people – we won," said Netanyahu, flanked by an IDF honor guard.

The marchers were quiet, still under the pall cast by visiting the camp's museum with its huge piles of braided human hair, worn shoes and broken glasses taken from the victims.

For some older people the return to scenes of terrible loss was hard to bear – but undertaken out of a need to bear witness.

"I come here with very dark thoughts, but I must be here," said Nahman Baharier, 75, from Tel Aviv, who was strong enough to survive forced labor in a mine near Auschwitz, while weaker prisoners were sent to the gas chambers.



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu carries an Israeli flag as he leads the March of the Living yesterday from Auschwitz to Birkenau. (Reuters)

Franciszka Pillersdorf recalled being brought to Auschwitz when the Nazis selected which prisoners might live and which would be killed. Her mother stayed by her two little sisters and died with them.

"All the time I remember... my mother said she would not leave my younger sisters. I was the oldest so I survived," said Pillersdorf, 73, who now lives in Toronto.

Buzek, in his address, recalled the tens of thousands of non-Jewish Poles who died at Auschwitz, and the great risk many Poles took to save their Jewish compatriots.

"Few people know that it was not only difficult, but also very dangerous to help Jews in Poland," Buzek said. "There was an immediate death penalty for saving even one Jew. The Nazis applied collective responsibility in such cases, and they would kill the whole family, often the neighbors."

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau – a Holocaust survivor who was liberated from Buchenwald at age 7 – looked visibly uncomfortable, stiffened and glared during Buzek's remarks.

But many in the crowd appeared to appreciate Buzek's point.

"I don't know if this was the right place to say that, but it's true," said Polish-born Miriam Hasson, who was 10 years old when the Nazis liquidated the Warsaw Ghetto. She survived in the care of a Christian Polish family outside of Warsaw, and now lives in Tel Aviv.

Another source of controversy played itself at the edge of Auschwitz, where a small group gathered to demand a huge wooden cross be allowed to remain.

A handful of supporters of the cross gathered near it before the march and displayed signs in English, including one that read: "Leave Christ at Auschwitz."

Jewish organizations say the eight-meter-high cross, visible from within the former death camp, disturbs the memory of the mostly Jewish dead.

Senior US official:

Next 10 days crucial for peace process

By HILLEL KUTTLER and MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The US believes that diplomatic moves over the next 10 days will determine whether the peace process will emerge from its year-long freeze, a senior administration official said in Washington yesterday.

US special envoy Dennis Ross and Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Martin Indyk are to arrive in the Middle East this weekend to prepare for the May 4 London meetings with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She is to meet separately with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

In what might be a new development, West Bank settlement leaders said yesterday they were told by senior officers in the Central Command that maps were being drawn for an 11 percent redeployment.

Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar said council members were given details of the plans. She would not identify the officers who divulged them.

She said that council members drafted letters last night to cabinet ministers to protest that the plans would isolate about 20 settlements, which would be surrounded by Palestinian territory and have only a single access road.

The Central Command spokesman had no comment. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's spokesman said he had no information about such plans, and that any such decisions are made by the cabinet.

The council heads' letters appealed to ministers' "sense of responsibility" after learning that the issue would be raised in Sunday's cabinet meeting, Tayar said.

She warned that if indeed the details are true, the settlers would seek to topple the government.

"Even when a 9% withdrawal was being discussed, we were warned by defense officials that national security would be forfeit," she said.

Settlers plan to hold a demonstration on Sunday outside the Prime Minister's Office to urge the government to stand firm and not give in to pressures, for which Tayar said the settlers would pay a high price.

"We hope that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu fulfills his responsibilities and remains in power, but we will withdraw our support if he goes ahead with an 11% withdrawal," she said.

Council member Elyakim Haetzni warned that an 11% withdrawal would bring destruction on the entire settlement enterprise in the West Bank and Gaza. He noted that Arafat has already announced intentions to declare Palestinian statehood in May 1999.

"He expects us to provide him with an airport, seaport, safe passage, and territorial contiguity. Without these things he can't declare a state," Haetzni said.

While the US has often called on the parties to make the "hard decisions" necessary to spur the talks, this time Washington believes that the two sides understand the gravity of the situation and the US's desire to resolve the stalemate, the senior administration official said.

"This really is the process now of bringing this to an agreement," he said.

The official said that the Ross and Albright trips were being viewed as "the end game.

"We've been at this a long time. We do believe this process needs to reach a resolution.

"We want to see closure. As long as we see the sides engaged, we'll be there," the official said. "This is a time of decisions. We are concerned about the process spinning on. The string for diplomatic decisions has run out.

"This isn't being arbitrary or forcing or compelling, but recognizing we have taken this as far as it can go. This is not a surprise. The parties know our thinking. It's the time to bring it to closure," the official said.

"We've made our views clear at the highest levels. We're not interested in a rhetorical statement. We want an agreement."

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Rabbinate includes Lebanon in IDF prayer

By HAIM SHAPIRO

With large numbers of IDF soldiers serving in Lebanon, the Chief Rabbinical Council this week decided to change the prayer on behalf of the nation's defenders, recited on Shabbat in many synagogues.

Until now the prayer had called for the well-being of soldiers "from the border of Lebanon to the riverbed of Egypt." The prayer now reads "in every place," to include soldiers serving in the security zone.

A similar change is to be made in the memorial prayer for fallen soldiers, traditionally recited on the three pilgrimage festivals.

The council also decided to include the police in the prayer by adding the words "and the security forces" to the prayer.

The change was made at the suggestion of Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, who presided over the council for the first time.

Until now Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau had served as president of the council and Bakshi-Doron had headed the rabbinical courts. From the beginning of Nissan, they exchanged these roles.

Bakshi-Doron explained to the council that he had had many appeals from the public to make these changes.

The council also decided that the special prayers for Independence Day, including the Hallel prayer, should be recited on Thursday, Independence Day, but not on Friday, which has been declared a vacation day by the government.

Liturgically, Friday is to treated as an ordinary day, the council ruled.

Currency-reform announcement to leave out taxation details

By DAVID HARRIS and Jerusalem Post Staff

The much-heralded announcement expected next week on the liberalization of currency-exchange regulations will exclude some key components due to ongoing disagreements between the Finance Ministry and the Bank of Israel, sources in both bodies told *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday.

At the same time, Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy said a general announcement is in the works concerning a shift from the existing territorially-based taxation system to a personal one.

A personal taxation system would mean that all taxpayers, including salaried workers, would have to file annual tax returns.

Coming at the same time as the currency reform, such a change would raise the dilemma of which overseas assets to tax, to what extent and by what mechanism.

Sources close to the currency reform process suggested many of the unannounced details would, in fact, pertain to various taxation aspects.

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman told the *Post* last night that immigrants do not stand to be affected by the prospective tax reform.

"There are no such implications, since all overseas-paid taxes will be credited by the Israeli government," he said, speaking by phone from Warsaw.

Neeman stressed he has no intention of announcing any tax proposals over the course of the next two weeks.

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SHABBAT	BEGINS	ENDS
Jerusalem	6:36 p.m.	7:52 p.m.
Tel Aviv	6:54 p.m.	7:54 p.m.
Haifa	6:48 p.m.	7:54 p.m.
Beersheba	6:52 p.m.	7:51 p.m.
Eilat	6:50 p.m.	7:50 p.m.

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Israeli intelligence experts say:

Iran nuclear papers genuine

By STEVE RODAN

Israeli government experts have deemed as genuine Iranian government documents obtained from the US that report Teheran's receipt of nuclear devices from Kazahkstan in 1992.

A senior government official said yesterday that the documents have been inspected by several intelligence sources and the assessment is that the Iranian correspondence is not a forgery.

"The feeling is that we are dealing with authentic material," the official, who refused to be identified, said. Israeli experts have been studying the documents for several weeks since they were relayed by Labor MK Rafi Elul. For his part, however, Elul said Israel had received another copy of the same documents in 1995 but had not published them.

A congressional source said documents that report Iran receiving at least two nuclear devices from Kazakhstan have been held by the House National Security Committee.

The source said a debate raged within the US intelligence community whether the documents were forged by the Iranian opposition movement.

Last week, two US House members, Bill McCollum (R, Florida) and James Saxton (R, New Jersey) told *The Jerusalem Post* that the evidence they've seen led them to conclude that Iran has nuclear weapons parts and supplies from the former Soviet Union republics in Central Asia.

A US analyst with extensive connections in the US intelligence community said government nuclear experts, including those in the CIA and Energy Department, are convinced that Iran has some sort of a non-operational nuclear device. But until now they can't prove it.

Rep. Curt Weldon, (R, Pennsylvania), who chairs the Research and Development subcommittee of the House National Security Committee, said he plans to "make a major case on the Hill" regarding a report in *The Post* earlier this month that Iran obtained nuclear weapons in 1992.

Weldon was quoted by *Aerospace Daily*, published in Washington, as saying, "This is a very dangerous situation if what the Israeli press is saying is true, and it will be a major problem for us because it means not only that Iran within 12 months from now [will have] medium range missiles, but it will also have a warhead to put onto that missile."

Ministry protests EU plan to boycott West Bank produce

By JAY BUSHINSKY and MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The European Community's reported intention to impose an economic crackdown against goods and agricultural produce which originate in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip drew a strong protest yesterday from Foreign Ministry Spokesman Aviv Shir-On.

"Any attempt to link Israel's economic relations with Europe to the Middle East peace process can cause real damage," Shir-On said.

The ministry's negative reaction was prompted by a report published in *Yediot Aharonot* according to which "secret dispatches received lately from the Israeli mission to the EU in Brussels indicate that the Europeans are about to impose sections on products that appear on their black list."

Shir-On contended that such a move could generate "negative and unrealistic expectations," presumably in the Palestinian Authority.

Describing the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as "delicate and complicated," he said they require "large amounts of good will" and must be free of pressure.

"We are convinced that Europe and its leaders will know how to avoid being lured by ideas which only can cause damage to our relationship and to the peace process," Shir-On said.

Yediot Aharonot said agreements between Israel and the EU grant full or partial exemption from customs tariffs to Israeli exports. It cites the economic annex to the Paris Protocol which was appended to the Oslo Accords to the effect that customs exemptions will be granted to all products from Israel and the PA, including those that stem from the Israeli settlements.

While there was no confirmation whether the EU had already taken a decision to impose the taxes or was still considering the proposal, Yehudit Tayar of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza said if the reports were true the settlers hope the Israeli government would deal with the issue.

"If a decision has already been made by the EU it is a serious violation of the Oslo Agreement," she said. "For so many years Israel has fought against other countries boycotting her goods and here we have fellow Jews attempting to damage our own country's products," Tayar added.

The products include agricultural goods, wines, flowers and processed food produced in settlements throughout Judea and Samaria.

According to the Paris Protocol, an economic appendix to the Oslo Agreements that relates to imported merchandise made in Israel, the autonomous areas and settlements, goods made in those areas are entitled to partial or full tax exemption.

Victor Harel deputy Director-General of the Foreign Ministry for Economic Affairs reportedly said " if the Europeans change this arrangement, Israel will see this as a grave violation of the Oslo accords."

Another Foreign ministry official warned that the diplomatic harm that will be caused to the Oslo process if such taxes are imposed on Yesha products would be greater than the economic damage.

Aharon Domb, director-general of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza said "the European Community is apparently not familiar with the Yesha residents. When they press us and close us in, we find even more ways to develop and broaden ourselves."

Gush Shalom spokesman Adam Keller praised the plan in a statement, which declared that: "settlements products are are manufactured in occupied areas under army control and according to international law they are not part of

No special pardons planned next week

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Despite public expectations of increased presidential pardons by Independence Day – and although he intends to double the normal amount of pardons he awards during the jubilee year – President Ezer Weizman does not plan to grant any special pardons before next week, Beit Hanassi announced yesterday.

"There will just be the regular commutations of sentences that take place before every holiday, such as letting prisoners go home a few days earlier, before Independence Day, instead of waiting until their time is up after the holiday," spokeswoman Batya Keinan said.

No additional pardons can be forthcoming for the time being, because no budgets have yet been allocated for the extra staff who will help wade through the piles of requests for pardons that have reached Beit Hanassi and the Justice Ministry in anticipation of clemency. The process will continue through the jubilee year.

"It will take time. There are no proper working teams yet and no rooms have been allocated them," Keinan said. Beit Hanassi Director-General Arye Shumer is expected to meet next week with Justice Ministry officials on the issue.

The president has gone on record as saying that he expects about double the number of pardons to be granted during the jubilee. In a normal year, Weizman commutes some 400 sentences, but only a few dozen pardons are granted for serious crimes. Weizman said he plans to adhere to this formula during the jubilee, although he will be more lenient than in previous years.

Former attorney-general Yona Blatman, who headed the committee which laid down recommended guidelines for presidential pardons during the coming year, said he believes about 800 people will benefit from early releases.

Special attention will be paid to prisoners who have tried to rehabilitate themselves in jail, to those who have come clean from drugs, to those who are suffering from ill-health, and to first-time offenders who are serving sentences of less than two years, Blatman said.



20% more crashes January-March

Paramedics treat a pedestrian struck by a taxi yesterday on Jerusalem's King George Boulevard. Thirty-five people lost their lives in 2,406 road accidents last month, according to figures published yesterday by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Some 4,450 were injured in the same period. Police said this is part of a 20% increase in road accidents between January and March over the same period last year. During the first quarter there were 126 deaths and 863 serious injuries, compared to 136 and 814 respectively during the first quarter of 1997.

(Text: David Harris; photo: Brian Hendler)

PA lets Israel grill Driben murder suspect

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The Israel Police was granted permission by its Palestinian counterpart yesterday to question the Palestinian wounded during the incident in Maon on Sunday that left settler Dov Driben dead and his comrades Yehoshafat Tor and Ephraim Peard wounded.

Accompanied by Hebron Palestinian Police chief Gen. Tarik Ziad, the Israeli investigators, headed by Ch.-Supt. Ya'acov Ben-Moshe, questioned 30-year-old gunshot victim Musa Dababsha at his bedside in the city's Aliya Hospital for some two hours.

Judea and Samaria police spokesman Opher Sivan said Dababsha did not admit to murdering Driben. Sivan said 17 Palestinians are still in custody and the investigation is continuing.

"Our version is the true one," Ziad told reporters, "and therefore we permitted Israeli police to question Dababsha. No matter what the results will be, the guilty people are those that give the settlers weapons to use against Palestinians."

Yesterday Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, accompanied by OC Central Command Maj.-Gen Uzi Dayan and Judea and Samaria police chief Cmdr. Yitzhak Aharonovitch, paid a condolence visit to the Driben family in Maon. Before the visit Mordechai went to the site of Driben's murder and received a briefing on the incident and the investigation.

Today Likud faction members, headed by MK Uzi Landau, are to visit the Driben family and continue to Hebron where they will tour the Machpela Cave and the Avraham Avinu quarter.

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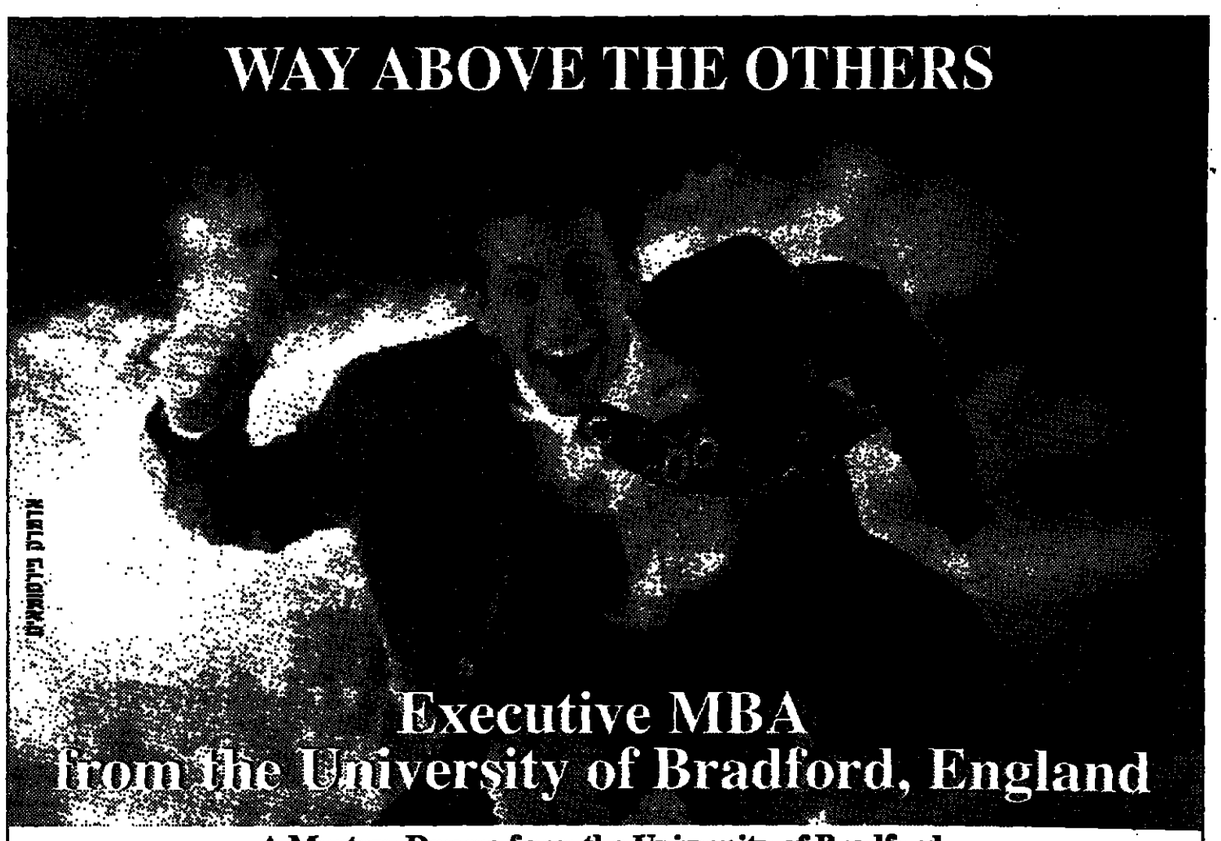
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Knesset remembers the names

By LIAT COLLINS

Against the backdrop of the Chagall tapestry depicting the history of the Jewish people, while the flags outside flew at half mast, the Knesset yesterday held its annual "Every Person has a Name" ceremony marking Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day.

President Ezer Weizman, Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, and other dignitaries attended.

At the beginning of the ceremony, a special six-branched candelabrum, signifying the six million who perished, was lit. Among those lighting a candle was journalist Yosef (Tommy) Lapid, a survivor who celebrated his bar mitzva in a cellar in the Budapest ghetto.

The Knesset ceremony, like others around the country, was dedicated to the theme of the contribution of Holocaust survivors in building the state.

Zelda's poem "Every Person has a Name," was read by Liron Peretz, from the Beit Shemesh school attended by the seven schoolgirls gunned down last year at Nahariyim.

Tichon talked of those who "in the days of the horrors of the camps and ghettoes, in the knowledge the world had abandoned them to their fate, learned the hard way that they could never again be a minority in a strange country. They bravely fought for their right to go to the Land of Israel, whose gates were closed to them. In shaky boats and crafts, they headed for a safe haven, were imprisoned in camps, and continued to come even when the country was in the grips of war."

Tichon mentioned former Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky, a survivor who arrived on the *Altalena*, immediately started fighting for the state, and later lost his own son in battle. The annual Knesset ceremony was Shilansky's initiative.

Bakshi-Doron noted that if a person dies and leaves no relatives to say Kaddish, the whole Jewish people becomes their relation.

One by one, people stepped up to the podium to read the names of those who perished. The president's wife, Reuma Weizman, read the names of Jews from Algeria; Tichon's wife, Ludmilla, recalled Belgian Jews and her own relatives from Poland.

One by one, the terrible stories surfaced: of those killed by their own neighbors when they sought refuge, including the father of former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir; of those killed in forests and woods; of those buried alive; of those killed in camps; and those who died from disease just before liberation. And perhaps worst of all: of those whose place and date of death is not known – so completely did they vanish.

Special mention was also made of Jews in Arab countries who were killed during the war. Nissim Kazaz, a leader of the Iraqi immigrant community, spoke of the Nazi-inspired pogrom in Baghdad in which his father was one of the 120 killed.

A children's choir sang "Eli, Eli," by Hanna Szenes. And then their voices rang out the national anthem: "Hatikva." The Hope.

Holocaust Remembrance Day marked with sirens, ceremonies

By ELLI WOHLGELERNTER and news agencies



Drivers stand at attention on Jerusalem's Rehov Nordau yesterday during the sounding of sirens marking Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day. (Brian Hendler)

At the site of the Auschwitz death camp, in Berlin, and throughout Israel yesterday, Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day was marked by wreath-laying ceremonies, the recitation of Kaddish and moments of silence.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu walked under the notorious metal gate of the Auschwitz death camp at the head of the March of the Living – about 6,500 young people and 1,000 Holocaust survivors – to mark the day.

At 10 o'clock here yesterday morning, the two-minute siren sounded, bringing the country to a halt and marking the beginning of the day's events.

At Kikar Shabbat in Jerusalem's Mea She'arim neighborhood, a group of haredim forcefully prevented a cameraman from filming the intersection, some yelling "Nazi" at him and his sound man. One haredi man grabbed the camera and broke off the front lens.

At checkpoints in the territories, soldiers set up barriers just before the siren to block the flow of traffic, and then stood at attention for two minutes, while Palestinian drivers waited patiently.

In eastern Jerusalem, Palestinians went about their business as normal, pausing only to watch Israeli policemen who stood with their heads bowed while the sirens wailed.

In Yad Vashem's Hall of Remembrance, visitors took turns reading names of victims. Many then placed white carnations on the black stone floor covered with the inscriptions of the names of the Nazi camps. By the end of the ceremony, most carnations piled up on the name Auschwitz.

Flags throughout the country were at half-mast for the day, and places of entertainment were closed.

In Berlin, the day was marked by reading aloud the names of its 55,000 Jewish victims of the Nazis. The annual event was held for the first time in east Berlin, on the grounds of a retirement home for Jews that was commandeered by the Gestapo in 1942 and converted into a holding depot for Jews destined for the death camps.

"We want to take this occasion to remember the Jews of this city who were stripped of their rights and terrorized, deported and finally murdered," said organizer Christa Grossmann of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization.

"All of these people, women and men, children and the elderly, were citizens of this city but their names are not on any gravestone, are not mentioned in any prayer for the dead," she said.

In the 1920s, more than 170,000 Jews lived in Berlin, representing a third of all German Jews at the time. The city today has less than 10,000 Jews.

The Berlin reading began at dusk on Wednesday with the name of Jutta Aal, a woman born in Bavaria in 1860 and killed at the Theresienstadt death camp on September 1, 1942.

Organizers estimated they would finish late yesterday evening with the name of Leo Zyzman, who was murdered at Auschwitz on July 24, 1942, at the age of 16.



Stamp honors Righteous Gentile diplomats

A first-day cover honoring five Gentile diplomats who saved Jews during the Holocaust by violating orders and giving them visas was issued yesterday by the Postal Authority's Philatelic Service. The stamp, designed by A. Vanooijen, features the portraits of Aristides de Sousa Mendes (Portugal); Sempo Sugihara (Japan); Selahattin Ulkumen (Turkey); Giorgio Perlasca (Spain); and Charles Lutz (Switzerland). On the background of the stamp is a photo of a crowd outside the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania, waiting to apply for Japanese transit visas, as well as a photo of a protective pass seal. (Text: Judy Siegel)

'Jubilee Bells' will mention Rabin's life and death

By HELEN KAYE

The Dor Shalom movement knew that Yitzhak Rabin's assassination was, in fact, included in the *Jubilee Bells* performance, but called for a boycott of the event anyway, a reliable source at the Jubilee Association said yesterday.

Moments from Rabin's life are shown in the planned film segment, and the Oslo Accords are mentioned.

There is also a segment showing the tears, the candles and the vigils in Rabin Square following Rabin's assassination in 1995.

Dor Shalom contends that this segment was added as a result of the pressure exerted over the past few days.

"Yitzhak Rabin's life and his tragic death are mentioned during the course of *Jubilee Bells* with all due honor to the man and his work," said jubilee committee director Doron Shmueli.

He added he was appalled that politicians and a political movement would made such despicable use of the most traumatic event that Israeli society has experienced.

Poll: Most Americans want to learn about Holocaust

WASHINGTON (AP) – One of five Americans does not know or is not sure Jews were killed in the Holocaust – or that it happened in World War II – according to a survey commissioned by the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

But the museum took heart Wednesday in findings that showed a large majority of Americans want to learn more about Nazi Germany's murderous campaign in hopes of preventing future genocide.

Eighty percent picked the Holocaust as one of history's most important lessons – behind the American Revolution and ahead of American Indians' struggles, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, slavery and the Cold War. And 66% wanted to know more about the Holocaust.

In one provocative question, Americans were asked, "Should we put the Holocaust behind us or continue to discuss it?" Eighty-three percent said keep discussing it, 10% said put it behind us and the rest were undecided.

Most Americans recognized that "the Holocaust isn't just a tale about what the Nazis did to Jews, but it's about what some human beings did to other human beings. There's a lesson for everyone in that," Bloomfield said.

She dismissed survey findings that indicated many Americans don't know Holocaust history very well, saying, "You're surprised by that in a country that doesn't know where Mexico is?" Surveys have suggested many Americans aren't good at geography, including a Gallup poll a decade ago that found nearly half the people surveyed couldn't locate Mexico on a map.

According to the Holocaust poll: – 21% didn't know or weren't sure whether Jews were murdered in gas chambers.

– Nineteen percent answered "false" when asked whether the Holocaust took place during World War II; another 19% weren't sure.

– While 66% of those asked said they wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, minorities were the most enthusiastic – 79% of blacks said they wanted more information and 75% of Latinos.

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Ministry of Defense
Israel Defense Forces
Independence Day Events Committee
Information Center
State of Israel 50 Independence Day
The Security Establishment Invites the Public
to attend IDF displays and visit IDF Bases and Depots
and Ministry of Defense Museums

OPEN BASES
NORTHERN COMMAND
1. Shimshon Base (Golani Junction)
2. Kurdani Base (near Tzur Shalom Junction)
3. Weaponry Exhibition at Golani Junction
SOUTHERN COMMAND
1. Natan Base (near Beersheba)
2. Givati Museum (near Castina Junction)
AIR FORCE
1. Air Force Technical School
2. Tel Nof Base
3. Ramat David Base
4. Hatzerim Base Museum. Open 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Flying displays. Entrance NIS15 adult, NIS10 child. Armed service members free.
5. Nevatim Base
NAVY
1. Haifa Base
2. Ashdod Base
3. Eilat Base will be open on the eve of Independence Day, April 29, 8 p.m. - midnight in cooperation with the Merhavit Association
Bases will be open
Thursday, April 30, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

IDF DEPOTS
The following depots will be open on Independence Day, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
NORTHERN COMMAND
1. Haifa
2. Afula
3. Karmiel
4. Upper Nazareth
5. Nahariya
6. Kiryat Shmona Metulla
Exhibition divided between the two depots
7. Hamra - open from April 21
8. Shlom
9. Ma'alot
10. Keisar
11. Ma'aleh Yosef
12. Yokne'am
13. Katzrin
14. Duliat al Carmel - in Yad Labanim
CENTRAL COMMAND
1. Etzion Bloc
2. Givat Oz
3. Ariel
4. Michlol Adumim
5. Jordan Valley Memorial
6. Kiryat Arba
7. Ma'oz Zion (Castel)
8. Ma'aleh Ephraim
9. Mateh Yehuda Regional Council
10. Alfei Menashe
11. Megilot (Megilot Regional Council)
SOUTHERN COMMAND
1. Kafir Bloc
2. Sderot
3. Netivot
4. Meitar
5. Arad
6. Yeroham
7. Ramat Hanegev/Ofakim Regional Council
Exhibition divided between the two depots.
8. Dimona
9. Mitzpe Ramon
Also weaponry exhibition at the Latrun Memorial Site and Givat Hatahmoshet, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Identity card or passport to be shown when entering an IDF base. No cameras, parcels or weapons may be taken in.

IDF DISPLAYS
On Israel's 50th Independence Day, the IDF and the 50th Anniversary Celebrations Association will present displays along the coast and in the skies.
JERUSALEM - Aerobatic display over the President's residence at 11:20 a.m. Between 12:18 and 12:38 p.m. planes will fly over Independence Park. The display will include a "50 formation" formation flying and mid-air refueling. Various helicopters will be among the airplanes seen.
CENTRAL DISPLAY - In cooperation with Tel Aviv - Jaffa Municipality the central display will take place on the Tel Aviv beach, between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. The display will include a flypast featuring formation flying, mid-air refueling, showing a shift into the sea, an air-sea rescue demonstration, and an aerobatic display by various planes and helicopters.
NAVAL FLOTILLA
HAIFA
The flypast can also be seen, at the following times:

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE MUSEUMS
The museums will be open 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Entrance free.
Batei Ha'osef Museum (History of the IDF)
35 Rehov Eilat, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Tel. 03-517-2913
The exhibits at the museum, which is located at the old Jaffa Railway Station, present the history of the Israel Defense Forces from the start of the struggle for statehood and up to the present. On show, accompanied by explanatory texts, are original weapons - light hand weapons, armored cars, tanks, cannons, photographs, and newspaper cuttings. Also on show are gifts and memorabilia received by ministers of defense and chiefs of staff, collections of rare rifles, machine guns and pistols and there are pavilions on a number of army corps. In the chronologically presented exhibits, emphasis has been placed on the personal and human stories behind the items shown.
At 11:00 a.m., there will be a performance by the mandolin band of Rosh Ha'ayin, conductor, Binyamin Bilsky.
" Hashomer Museum
Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, Tel. 06-694-1565
The story of the Bar Giora and Hashomer organizations - their guarding, settlement, and weapons acquisition activities, and defense of the Yishuv. Audio-visual presentation.
NEW AT THE MUSEUM: Temporary exhibition of paintings by Shlomit Eitan of Moshav Mishmar Ha'emek - "Town and Stockade" Experiences of her childhood. Audio-visual presentation
Jewish Brigades Museum
Moshav Avihail (near Netanya), Tel. 09-862-9240
The brigades were set up to fight in World War I. They contributed to freeing Eretz Yisrael from the Turks. Films will be screened.
The Eliahu Golomb Haganа Museum
23 Sderot Rothschild, Tel Aviv, Tel. 03-560-8624
The development of national defense, from its beginnings to the establishment of the IDF. An impressive exhibit takes you from the establishment of Bar-Giora, to the setting up of Hashomer
NEW AT THE MUSEUM, an exhibition that covers the stages of the
The Etzel Museum
33 King George St., Tel Aviv, Tel. 03-528-4001
The Lehi - Avraham Stern - Yair) Museum
8 Rehov Stern, Tel Aviv, Tel. 03-682-0288
" The Museum of the Etzel in 1948 (Amihai Paglin (Gidi) Museum
Charles Clore Garden, Jaffa outskirts, Tel. 03-517-2044.
The Museum of Underground Fighters' Prison, Jerusalem
The Russian Compound, Jerusalem, Tel. 02-623-3166
" Museum of the Underground Fighters' Prison, Stockade
The Citadel of Acre, Tel. 04-991-8264
" The Museum of Imprisoned Underground Fighters - Acre
The David Hacohen Illegal Immigration and Navy Museum
204 Allenby Road, Haifa, Tel. 04-853-6244

Moshav movement head: Don't stigmatize Thai laborers

Kibbutz rape-murder raises concern about foreign workers

By DAVID RUDGE

Workers from Thailand have in the past decade become the backbone of the labor force in the country's agriculture industry – especially on moshavim and some kibbutzim.

Farmers unable to find an alternative economically suitable, consistent, conscientious, and from a security point of view stable workforce, have until now viewed the Thai workers as a godsend.

This attitude apparently *still* prevails, even after the arrest of Thai worker Korbua Sumbat, 29, on suspicion of raping and murdering 23 year-old Yamit Regev at Kibbutz Na'an nearly two weeks ago.

Nevertheless, the murder and its aftermath have provoked rumblings of disquiet in the farming communities themselves.

One of the most outspoken voices was that of Yossi Mizrahi, head of the Yesud Hama'ala Local Council and himself a member of the Upper Galilee village where the number of Thai workers has reached almost 10 percent of the population.

"There are concentrations [of Thai workers] on the moshava which in my opinion is not healthy and is potentially dangerous and could, God forbid, harm the quality of life here," said Mizrahi.

"We have a situation where six or seven houses have been rented [by farmers] and are used to provide accommodation for a large number of Thai workers, with sometimes 10 or more in one house.

"The houses are generally far from the homes of the employers, so there is no close supervision, and frankly parents are afraid to let their daughters pass close to these places at night.

"I have nothing against the workers themselves, but they are cooped up in one small village with no outlet for their natural needs and desires," Mizrahi said. "They are very nice individually, but one of their characteristics is their tendency to drink and sometimes get drunk. If this should happen they are no longer in control of themselves and this is dangerous."

Mizrahi said there were as many as 100 Thai workers on the moshava, which itself has a population of about 1,000.

"I am a farmer myself and only too well aware of the scarcity of workers, but I am also head of the local council and as such concerned with the safety and welfare of all the residents."

He has suggested to the Labor and Welfare Ministry that regulations be amended so that employers would have to keep foreign workers in accommodations near to their homes.

"In this way there would be closer supervision, and it would also automatically limit the number of workers and break up large concentrations," said Mizrahi.

Kibbutz Ha'on, on the eastern shore of Lake Kinneret, has employed Thai workers, mainly in the banana plantations, for several years.

"Until now there has been no reason to be worried about them. Whether that will change now I can't say," said a member of the kibbutz, who preferred not to be named.

"For the most part, they are very quiet and keep to themselves and are very efficient at their work, which wouldn't be done otherwise because we don't have enough members," she said. "They are also terrified of losing their jobs because they earn more here than they ever could at home."

MK Shalom Shimon, general manager of the Moshav Movement, stressed that despite the pain and sorrow over the murder of Yamit, it would be wrong to stigmatize the entire community of Thai workers because of an aberration.

"In the past 10 years we have had excellent experience with the Thai workers who work hard, stay for a maximum of a year or so and then go home. They don't bring their wives or families and try and settle here as some other foreign workers do," said Shimon.



UNESCO meets WIZO
Ute Henriette Ohoven, UNESCO's special ambassador for children at risk (center), visits a cooking class yesterday at WIZO's Ma'an Educational Rehabilitation Center for Youth in Tel Aviv, flanked by World WIZO chairwoman Helena Glaser (right) and Ma'an director Bracha Halper. (Assaf Shilo/Israel Sun)

ACRI slams Yishai remarks

By BATSHEVA TSUR and MICHAL YUDELMAN

A verbal attack against foreign workers by Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai raised a storm of protests yesterday among civil rights activists.

Yishai said following the arrest of a Thai worker Wednesday on suspicion of the murder of Yamit Regev at Kibbutz Na'an that foreign workers were having a "deadly effect" on Israeli society. He termed their quarters "centers of alcohol, drugs and prostitution."

"I'm acting to deport as many illegal foreign workers as possible," Yishai said.

The Thai suspect was identified as Korbua Sumbat, 29, who worked at the kibbutz.

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said in a statement that Yishai's remarks "are based on a single and unusual case in which a foreign worker is suspected of committing murder and [these remarks] have implications for an entire public."

"They pour oil on the fire of that very xenophobia that he claims to be afraid of," ACRI said. It called on public figures to denounce the minister's remarks.

Yishai tried to modify his utterances in an interview yesterday, saying that "among the foreign workers there are good ones and bad ones."

"I'm not talking about the personality of the workers but about facts, here and in the world and I warned about developing xenophobia," he added.

Yishai said that perhaps deportation is not the answer, after all, since "if we deport 20,000, than 25,000 others will want to come."

One possible answer, he said, is to fine an employer who hires an illegal foreign worker by more than NIS 20,000.

The Anti-Defamation League's Israel office condemned Yishai's statements as "irresponsible and dangerous." It issued a statement warning against prejudicial generalizations about foreign workers by public officials.

ADL office director Rabbi David Rosen said that in light of the Jewish people's tragic past experience, "and how much more so on Yom Hashoah, we should ensure avoiding the dangerous pitfalls of stereotyping and prejudicial generalization."

בס"ד

We'll not give in to American pressure

Independence Day Celebration at HAR HOMA

Laying of corner stone of new neighborhood

Independence Day, Thursday, April 30, 1998

11:00 a.m MARCH from Armon Hanatziv promenade to Har Homa
Short route starting from Gilo junction - possible with baby carriage

12 noon HAPPENING charcoal grills, active recreation, special activities for children, creative workshops

3:00 p.m. CEREMONY of laying corner stone for Har Homa neighborhood.
Participating: rabbis, MKs, public personalities, residents' association members.

Participating: Transportation (fare charged) at 10:00 a.m
JERUSALEM: Binyenei Ha'uma 10:00 a.m - 1:00 p.m. BNEI BRAK: Rehov Rabbi Akiva (near Dubek) 10:00-11:00 a.m. ASHDOD: New central bus station. ASHKELON: Central bus station. BEERSHEBA: Near Shekem. BAT YAM: Near the memorial. GIVATAYIM: Beit Vahalin. HADERA: Central bus station. HOLON: Armon Cinema. HAIFA: Neve Sha'anan - Central Synagogue. Rehov Herzl. Kiryat Eliahu - Rehov Tel Aviv cor Reh. Rina, Kiryat motzkin - Central Synagogue Rehov Hashofrim. Kiryat Shmuel - near Mobotiver Synagogue. Kiryat Ata - near Kupat Refoim Rehov Frenkel. KFAR SABA: Merkaz Ahuvim. NETANYA: Central bus station. RISHON LEZION: Central bus station. REHOVOT: Herzel cor. Ya'acov. RAMAT TIKVA: Municipality plaza. KIRYAT GAT: Central bus station. RA'ANANA-GAN: Ramat Amidar Rehov Ha'ezel, near Elie Cohen Garden. Yad Lebanim. TEL AVIV: Mann Auditorium plaza.
DETAILS: Tel. 02-6522111

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History on display
'Jerusalem Post' President and Publisher Norman Spector (left) and David Lewis, president of Isrotel Hotel Management Ltd., look at one of the paper's historic front pages, on display at a jubilee year exhibition this week at Eilat's Royal Beach Hotel.

No casualties in Athens blast

2 firebombs explode outside Jewish offices

ATHENS – Two firebombs exploded yesterday outside the offices of a Jewish organization, touching off blazes that caused damage but no injuries, police said.

The makeshift devices, made of gas canisters, exploded inside the building's empty elevator within seconds of each other at midday.

The first blast occurred as the elevator was between the fourth and fifth floors. The other canister exploded on the sixth floor. The Central Board of Jewish Communities, the headquarters for local Jewish councils around Greece, has offices on each of the three floors.

An anonymous caller warned police of an imminent "dynamic action" on Sourmeli Street, where the attack took place, but the bombs exploded minutes before police cars reached the scene.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, and it was not clear whether the Jewish group was the intended target. The building also houses offices that issue temporary work permits to illegal immigrants.

A group calling itself Conscientious Arsonists launched a similar firebomb attack against a right-wing newspaper earlier this week. The group claimed that attack was a protest against racism sometimes experienced by illegal immigrants.

The Greek government strongly condemned yesterday's attack.

"Such actions are have nothing to do with our people's feelings and they damage our country," government spokesman Dimitris Reppas said in a statement.

Police said the damage was not heavy but the explosions caused considerable panic among people inside the offices at the time.

Firebomb devices also have been used in a spate of recent attacks around the capital aimed mostly at foreign targets.

Earlier this month, Greece's deadliest terrorist group, November 17, claimed responsibility for a series of attacks against American targets, including an anti-tank rocket blast at a Citibank branch.

A member of the Jewish group, Hachan Isaac, said the organization had received no bomb threats this year, although they had many in 1997.

Isaac said there has been no security in the building for the past four years. Athens' only synagogue has round-the-clock protection.

In 1983, a bomb aimed at the Jewish organization exploded outside their offices. Three years later, a bomb targeting the immigrant offices exploded in the building's entrance. (Agencies)

MDA sanctions may cause ambulance delays

By JUDY SIEGEL

The Tel Aviv District Labor Court was due late last night to discuss Magen David Adom management's request for restraining orders against MDA workers, who applied sanctions yesterday.

MDA ambulances in the Dan region assembled in Tel Aviv rather than standing on duty at their local stations in Bnei Brak, Givatayim, and Ramat Gan, threatening to cause delays in arrival in Dan region cities outside Tel Aviv.

But the MDA spokesman said that, fortunately, there were no untoward events endangering the public yesterday, despite the sanctions. The union announced that until further notice, a different region will suffer from the sanctions 24 hours at a time. If restraining orders are not issued and observed, the regions to be affected on Sunday will be Petah Tikva, Herzliya, Kfar Sava, Rosh Ha'ayin, Kiryat Ono and Ariel.

All 40 ambulances and mobile intensive care units serving these areas will be assembled at the Petah Tikva station instead of being distributed among the other stations.

The union is demanding special-duty pay granted to hospital workers, continued allocation of medics to accompany ambulance drivers, grade rises, and compensation for evacuating victims of accidents involving chemicals and other dangerous substances.

MDA management declared that it fully supports the workers' demands, but urged them not to endanger the public.

American Jews urged to help with genetic testing

By MAGGIE FOX

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Top genetic researchers joined forces with leaders of the Jewish community on Wednesday to urge Jews to take part in genetic tests they say will benefit Americans in general and people around the world.

But they also said laws were needed to protect people's privacy and ensure that no one was discriminated against because of their genes.

The experts were speaking at a conference called by Hadassah and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs to address fears that Jews were being singled out for genetic research, and stigmatized as being genetically flawed as a result.

"We are all walking around with flaws," Dr. Francis Collins, who heads the National Human Genome Research Institute, told the conference.

Collins said many groups were studied by geneticists, not just Jews. He urged everyone who could to take part in genetic trials if asked and said many people could benefit from knowing about genetic variations that might predispose them to disease.

"Yet we have to make sure that when we are pushing science as hard as we can, which is the only moral thing to so, that we are protecting the issues of privacy," he told a news conference.

Genetic research brings results that can help all people, not just the groups being tested, the conference was told.

"We are trying to impress upon everyone in the world that we are talking about them," said Louise Slaughter, a New York Democratic congresswoman who has introduced legislation that would insure privacy for people who take the genetic tests.

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Shira - Shkolnik

Not about nothing

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

There's nothing to read in the newspaper. There's nothing to watch on television (except a comedy about nothing). I don't have a thing to wear.

Someone wrote this week that when the situation-comedy series *Seinfeld* ends this spring, Jerry will be devastated. "He doesn't have a wife and kids to go home to - only a blank sheet of paper," gushed the sympathetic columnist. That's a blank sheet that brings in a million dollars a week, so spare us.

We lesser media mortals face the same blank page and no million dollars. What's disgusting, of course, is that one shouldn't have to "think of something," especially for a foreign affairs column. Journalists get irritated when confronted by readers who say they don't understand Bosnia or Cambodia or Northern Ireland, because nobody ever explains the issues to them. Or Thailand - but we'll come back to that.

But then journalists sift mountains of information in search of a subject to titilate those elusive bored readers, who claim they want to be informed about their neighbors in the global village. We know they could not be prodded with hot needles into reading an analysis of current events in Saudi Arabia or Sudan. Or Thailand.

Motor mouth

Earlier this week, this column apparently startled some readers by saying (apropos Saddam Hussein) that the banality of evil is matched only by the boredom of chronicling it. It is a sad fact that in this information age, we are all becoming more and more incapable of handling the flow, more unsure of what we ought to know, and more uneasy about missing something vital.

The global village and the information revolution are not only a crock - but a dangerous crock. Instead of becoming universal, we are becoming self-obsessed ghetto morons.

This is serious. When Thai worker Korbua Sumbat was arrested this week on suspicion of a rape-murder, other Thai workers on the kibbutz were locked up under guard. Labor Minister Eli Yishai blabbed nonsensically and disgracefully that "what we fear has come to pass - foreign workers are deadly in Israeli society."

Excuse me? If an Israeli criminal kills someone in New York, should the mayor react with this same racist outburst? Should all Israelis there be confined under armed guard? It's Yishai's mouth that's deadly - some public utterances in Israel are becoming an embarrassment. Was this not a week in which we should be recalling other racist judgments, collective punishments? The Thai government should nip in the bud with a severe protest this attitude towards its perfectly respectable workers in Israel.

String 'em up

What have we become - a racist lynch mob? In the case of the kibbutz gang rape a couple of years ago, were all other kibbutzniks confined to their rooms in collective punishment? Incidentally, it was Sumbat's Thai co-workers who blew holes in his alleged alibi.

Let those who have ever passed over with a yawn any article about Thailand, its culture and people, and who now babble in agreement with Yishai, hang their heads in shame. Yishai would be fired in any other democracy.

Racism in Israel should be a contradiction in terms, anathema. It is becoming a disgrace, and will raise an international outcry if it is perceived as state racism against foreigners. First, the foreign workers were welcomed and encouraged, because they could be trusted - unlike "Arabs." Then they were exploited and cheated. Then they became the butt of jokes about eating dogs and cats. Now all are branded as potential rapist-murderers if one commits a crime.

Israel openly embraced a guest-worker policy, because Israelis could not or would not do the jobs that Palestinians did. It did so without examining the results of guest-worker policies in other democracies and making likely projections for similar patterns here. There is a price to be paid, as Germany found with its Turks. Guest workers are not faceless economic units to be shuffled about in camps and treated like dirt.

Guest workers are social, dignified human beings, scrabbling for a living like everyone else. Many will make the best of their new lives - try to integrate, some will marry locals, put down roots, breed children - who then have birth-rights. It is better for a civilized state to acknowledge the social phenomena and provide for them than to stick its head in the sand and its racist butt in the air.

It's a problem, it's an imported problem, but let us not expand it into a redneck racist problem. If one man killed, one criminal man is guilty and deserves the full vigor of the law after a fair trial. And if one criminal is a Thai, does that suddenly make all Thais suspect on a kibbutz that previously lauded them as gentle model workers? Why not blow up their residences too!

The next time we yawn and pass over an article about Thais, or Nigerians, or Burmese, or Finns, it might be worth remembering, in a Jewish state, that nothing is about nothing - except *Seinfeld*. For the rest of us, to be informed is to be civilized - remember the ignorant southern redneck cop in *Driving Miss Daisy*. He sneered about "the old nigger and the old Jew" because they had only one another for company. I wonder why.

Yeltsin-Duma crunch vote today

By MARTIN NESIRKY

MOSCOW (Reuters) – President Boris Yeltsin met the leaders of both houses of parliament and called his main Communist opponent yesterday, in a final attempt to defuse a month-long crisis over who should be Russia's prime minister.

The State Duma, or lower house, holds a do-or-die vote today on whether to approve his nominee, 35-year-old former energy minister Sergei Kiriyenko, or vote itself out of a job by rejecting him for a third time. That would force an election.

"So, this is the last decisive, deciding one," Yeltsin said with a grin, alluding to a line in the Communist Internationale anthem, as he welcomed Gennady Seleznyov and Yegor Stroyev to his Kremlin office.

"But this is a round table, not a battle," the 67-year-old president added, showing no sign of strain from leading a country which has been without a full government for a month.

Stroyev is chairman of the Federation Council, or upper house, and Seleznyov, a moderate Communist, is speaker of the opposition-dominated Duma.

The Kremlin said Yeltsin agreed to a suggestion from the two speakers to send deputies a letter asking them to back Kiriyenko. But he ruled out visiting the Duma himself to present the young technocrat to the chamber, saying it was pointless.

Sending a letter to all deputies in the 450-seat Duma is an unusual step that may flatter some parliamentarians and provides ammunition for Seleznyov against Communist hardliners.

But it may not be enough for some parties which wanted Yeltsin to explain his motives for Kiriyenko's candidacy in person and outline his cabinet plans. Yeltsin sacked the old government on March 23, saying it had gone soft on reform.

He took another demonstrative step yesterday, phoning Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov to urge him to drop opposition to Kiriyenko and think of the state rather than his party.

"As much as I didn't want to, I brought myself to call Zyuganov," Yeltsin said with evident disdain in televised remarks to journalists before a meeting with Kiriyenko. "You don't believe your ears? I just put the phone down." But keeping the pressure up, Zyuganov told reporters before a crucial plenary meeting of senior party members that the top leadership had agreed late on Wednesday not to waver.

"Altogether 21 members attended and all of them spoke in favour of a tough position and voting against Kiriyenko," Zyuganov said. It was far from clear what the outcome would be at the wider meeting.

"No Communist deputy is afraid of an early election, but people are taking a broader view, because the dissolution of the Duma would mean completely paralyzing the legislative power," Seleznyov told reporters. "Many deputies will vote 'for' but that doesn't mean they support Kiriyenko."

The Communists, who are the biggest Duma force with 138 seats, hold the key to Friday's vote. They helped throw out Kiriyenko's nomination in the other two votes.

A growing band of people, including sacked prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and influential regional governors, have urged the Duma to swallow its pride and back Kiriyenko.

Some parties which voted against before have had a change of heart, but the margin is still too close to call. Kiriyenko needs 226 votes to be approved.

An important factor will be how deputies decide to vote – openly, by secret ballot, or in an anonymous electronic vote. A secret ballot would allow deputies to go against party lines.

Markets have largely remained unflustered by the crisis, but knock-on factors have rattled some players. Palladium was fixed at another all-time high of $390.00 an ounce in London, based on worries about Russian exports. Russia is the world's largest supplier of the precious metal.

Yeltsin's nomination of ex-banker Kiriyenko on March 23 to replace Chernomyrdin with a brief to speed up market reforms was controversial from the start.

The Communists and their allies, who dominate the Duma, say Kiriyenko is too young and inexperienced to take on the second most powerful job in Russian politics. And they deeply distrust his liberal views on the economy and social policy.



Lebed's french connection

French movie star Alain Delon, left, meets former Russian Security Council chief Alexander Lebed yesterday at the Guard's Mountain, a check point founded by Russian Cossacks in 1628 outside Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. Alain Delon arrived in Krasnoyarsk to support Lebed in his election compaign for the governorship of the region, some 4,000 km. east of Moscow. The elections take place on Sunday.. (AP)

Turkish elections brought forward to March

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkish leftist leader Deniz Baykal said yesterday he and Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz had agreed on holding an early general election in March 1999.

"This is an important agreement. I hope that we can keep within this agreement," Baykal told a news conference in parliament after a one-and-a-half hour meeting with Yilmaz.

Opposition powerbroker Baykal said a pre-election government would be formed after parliament returns from its summer recess in October. He said his party may join the new government.

An independent prime minister would take the place of Yilmaz in the pre-election government, ahead of both general and local polls on March 28, 1999, Baykal said. General elections, last held in December 1995, were not officially due until 2000.

Baykal's Republican People's Party has supported the coalition in key parliamentary votes since it came to power last June, in exchange for assurances that early elections would be held at some point. In recent weeks he renewed pressure on Yilmaz to set a date.

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG
The Israeli Institute for Economic & Social Research
THE VAN LEER JERUSALEM INSTITUTE

Obedience to the Law in Israel: State Law or Halachic Law

Upon the publication of the research
"Ethnocentricity, Citizenship, and the Rule of Law in Israel"

Greetings and introduction by:
Dr. Winfried Veit
Director, Friedrich Ebert Foundation Israel

Chairperson: **Prof. Gerald Cromer**
Bar-Ilan University

Participants:
Prof. **Yaron Ezrahi**, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Dr. **Samuel Peleg**, Tel-Aviv University
Prof. **Menachem Friedman**, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. **Yedidia Stern**, Bar-Ilan University
Mr. **Oren Soffer**, The Israeli Institute for Economic & Social Research
Ms. **Aliza Korenstein**, Open University
The Israeli Institute for Economic & Social Research

Monday, April 27, 1998, 4:30 p.m.
at TheVan Leer Jerusalem Institute, 43 Jabotinsky St.

The panel will be held in Hebrew
with simultanious translation into English
The public is invited (R.S.V.P. Tel: 03-5607465)

Greece mourns former leader Karamanlis, 91

ATHENS (Reuters) – Constantine Karamanlis, who died yesterday at the age of 91, was acknowledged as one of Greece's greatest statesmen this century and the man who restored democracy after the fall of the 1967-1974 military junta.

During a career which began in the 1930s, he was elected to parliament 12 times, was prime minister for a total of 14 years and state president for 10.

Karamanlis used his stature abroad to convince Western leaders that Greece should become the only Balkan state in the European Union. It joined in 1981.

But Karamanlis is best remembered for the tumultuous crowd scenes when he arrived home in July 1974 after 11 years of self-exile in Paris. His return marked the end of the seven-year military junta, which had used mass arrests and torture.

A tall, abrasive man, Karamanlis often had tough words for fellow Greeks and what he saw as an inclination toward political instability. He prided himself on his long stays in power.

James Earl Ray dies

NASHVILLE (AP) — James Earl Ray, the petty criminal who confessed to assassinating Martin Luther King Jr., then recanted and spent decades seeking a trial, died yesterday. He was 70.

Ray, who was serving a 99-year prison sentence for the 1968 slaying, died of kidney failure and complications from liver disease, said his brother, Jerry Ray. He had been hospitalized repeatedly since late 1996.

By pleading guilty in March 1969, Ray avoided the possibility of a conviction at trial and a death sentence. He then argued for years that he was coerced into making the plea.

William Gibbons, the lead state prosecutor in Memphis, said Ray's legal petitions aimed at getting his guilty plea thrown out are now over.

"About the only thing I can say is I believe the history books will accurately record that James Earl Ray was the killer of Dr. King," Gibbons said.

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Brother: **Elli and Matya Tur-Paz**
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Funeral at 11 a.m., today Friday, at Har Tamir, Givat Shaul
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Celebrating the Moorish expulsion

An elephant performs for the crowd during the annual celebration of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain in the town of Alcoy, southeastern Spain, on Wednesday. The Moors, a nomadic people of north Africa, arrived in Spain in 711 and were expelled in 1492 after Grenada fell to Spanish King Ferdinand V and Queen Isabella. (AP)

Britian-bound nuclear material leaves Georgia amid controversy

By SUREN BABAYAN

TBILISI (Reuters) – A controversial shipment of nuclear material destined for Britain has left the research reactor outside the Georgian capital Tbilisi where it was being stored, a senior official said yesterday.

"Both the enriched uranium and the spent nuclear fuel have been removed from our reactor," its director Shukri Abramidze said.

Abramidze declined to say whether the nuclear material — comprising four kilos of highly enriched uranium and about one kilo of spent nuclear fuel – had already left Georgia.

The New York Times said on Tuesday Washington was helping the former Soviet republic to remove nuclear fuel from the research reactor.

On Wednesday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair defended his decision to accept the cache, saying the operation had been kept secret because of fears that rebels opposed to the Georgian government might take control of the research reactor.

The cargo is expected to arrive in Britain later this week on a US military transport plane. British environmentalists have protested against the government's decision to take it.

Vakhtang Abashidze, spokesman for Georgia's President Eduard Shevardnadze, said Tbilisi had reached an agreement with Washington last year on getting rid of the nuclear material.

He said the agreement also envisaged active US involvement in improving security at the 2,000 megawatt reactor, which was built in the 1950s to conduct experiments at low temperatures.

Georgian Foreign Minister Irakly Menagarishvili said on Tuesday his impoverished country would get "quite a significant sum for the removal" but declined to give details.

Abashidze said the money would be allocated to the Tbilisi Institute of Physics, which owns the reactor.

Georgia had originally hoped to enlist Russian help in removing the nuclear material but Moscow failed to make good on promises to accept the shipment. Washington went ahead with the operation while keeping Moscow fully informed.

Genscher retires from German parliament

By IAN MADER

BONN (AP) – Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who championed German reunification during his 18 years as German foreign minister, announced his retirement from parliament yesterday.

The 71-year-old politician received a standing ovation and handshakes from colleagues across Germany's political spectrum after his speech before parliament's lower house.

"You have just heard a passionate patriot," Chancellor Helmut Kohl told the chamber afterward.

Genscher was foreign minister for 18 years, including under Kohl, and retired from that post two years after the 1990 reunification.

Since then, he has joined the chancellor in stressing that Germany needs to bring its economic strength into a united European currency to assure its neighbors it seeks cooperation, not hegemony.

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Jubilee amnesty

The Blatman Committee should have quit while it was ahead. In its report submitted to the president and justice minister on Wednesday, the committee opened by declaring, "The 50th anniversary of the establishment of the state is not in itself a pretext that justifies the granting of a sweeping amnesty, especially in light of the latest figures, which point to a worrisome increase in crime in many areas." Citing "public expectations" as the reason for contradicting itself, the committee proceeded to recommend a small reduction in sentences for sweeping categories of prisoners.

The Blatman Committee, composed of relevant professionals from the president's office and the Justice Ministry, recommended a jubilee "bonus" of a 9 percent reduction in sentence for prisoners who have been recommended for parole, who have served 60 percent of their sentence and qualify for parole, and for first-time offenders serving sentences of up to six months.

In addition, the committee recommended that prisoners who had worked to rehabilitate themselves, quit drugs, or who are in poor health should also be considered for sentence reductions. At the same time, the president was urged to consider the danger posed to society by releasing the prisoner, the severity of the crime, and any "concern that the reduction would lead the prisoner or others to condone similar acts in the future."

This last concern – of sending a signal that society does not take certain crimes or crime in general seriously – hangs like a cloud over the entire jubilee amnesty enterprise. The committee itself correctly applied this logic to one area – traffic violations. Contrary to earlier speculation, the committee recommended against any jubilee amnesty for fines and driver's license revocations, arguing that such a measure would send a "non-educational message" to the public. Considering that, last month alone, 35 people lost their lives in 2,406 road accidents – in which some 4,450 were injured – road safety education itself is a priority message that is not getting through.

It is, of course, a great relief that, if the president heeds the Blatman report, we will be spared the increase in road accidents that would likely occur if restrictions were lifted from some of the nation's most dangerous drivers. The idea that the jubilee amnesty would signal that reckless driving is not a serious crime was a particularly disconcerting prospect that seems to have been avoided. But now the reverse problem has arisen, in that the report did not exempt any other criminals from its sentence-reduction proposal, including murderers, rapists, and drug dealers.

President Ezer Weizman, as a man of the people, should realize the difference between the self-interested and demagogic forces behind the campaign for a broad amnesty and the public's real expectation that their lives and property not be endangered by criminals having their own jubilee celebration. Weizman is wrong in asserting that "something must be done in the 50th year," as if the fixed point is that there must be amnesty, while public safety and the sanctity of the rule of law are luxuries that must be compromised.

"Something" can and should mean that the only increase in pardons, if any, in the jubilee year be from the greater manpower devoted to processing parole requests, not from a relaxation in the standards for parole. And this year, as in any other year, the president can exercise his power in the rare instances in which sentences are truly excessive.

Such excesses can occur, after all, even in the American judicial system, which sentenced Jonathan Pollard to life without parole for a crime that normally results in much shorter sentences, and in violation of the government's own plea-bargain agreement. Pollard committed a serious crime, but after 12 years in jail, he has served longer than any spy for a friendly country and more than most of those who spied for enemies of the United States.

Another celebrated case, which at times unfortunately has been linked to Pollard, is that of Mordechai Vanunu. Unlike Pollard, Vanunu has expressed no remorse for his crime and reportedly said recently that he would do it again. Even though Vanunu disdained democratic methods in advancing his own anti-nuclear cause, his request for parole should be considered as any other, without regard for the international clamor for his release.

The cases of the jubilee amnesty, Pollard's bloated sentence, and the highly-politicized pro-Vanunu campaign, all represent a potential for dangerous distortions of the scales of justice. Regarding the jubilee, Weizman should use his authority and judgment to preserve justice and keep the 50th year celebrations from harming public security.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PESSAH LESSON

Sir, – Uri Regev's "The historic lesson of Pessah" (April 16) was, for me at least, a lesson in humility. I honestly must admit that I do not understand the essence of his message. The distinguished gentleman wanted us to believe that neither our government, the established rabbinate and citizens at large seized the essence of Pessah.

I think it would have been more helpful to those of us interested in self-improvement, as Jews and human beings, to have been given something more specific.

Although I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the author, I have a hard time accepting that only Regev, and perhaps an elite group known to him, were in possession of the essence of Pessah. His statements bring back memories of my undergraduate and graduate days in the US, where lofty statements of this kind were selectively used by Reform clergy in our campuses for opportunistic purposes, accepting and rejecting the teachings of our sages and our tradition at will to support politically correct issues, while in their personal lives they openly aped the ways of the Gentile.

When we look around our country, we see the enormous effort that both our government and private individuals have made and are making to improve the human condition of our people.

The religious community in Israel, and the haredim in particular, provide more support to the needy than any other group. We, as a nation, although dealing with existential issues on a daily basis, are willing to risk the presence in our midst of tens of thousands of our avowed enemies, so that they too can improve their lot. I know of no bondage in this country.

I accept that we are far from being a perfect society, but I believe that the Jews of this country are trying to do what is right.

AMRAM YOSEF
Petah Tikva.

MILWAUKEE MESSIAH

Sir, – With great interest and anticipation I looked forward to meeting "the man in the white golf cap" – that is the way he described himself – so we could rendezvous at Angel's in the Bell Tower. After all, he represented something absolutely unique in our long Jewish history.

Think of it! We pray daily, "Next year in Jerusalem" and here comes a messenger who advertises in *The Jerusalem Post* "Next year in Milwaukee" (April 6), inviting readers who are thinking of moving to the US, to "Begin thinking Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

He proved to be a grandfatherly man, accompanied by his grandchild, who comes to Israel every Pessah to visit his children. He said he has advertised in Jewish publications in the US and had received inquiries from Israel, therefore why not advertise in *The Jerusalem Post*?

We have had false Messiahs in the past but none of them offered us Milwaukee!

MURRAY SAFRAN
Chairperson, AACI Jerusalem Region.
Jerusalem.

WATCHDOG FOR DEMOCRACY

Sir, – Christopher Walker, *Times of London* Israel correspondent, blasts *The Jerusalem Post* (March 23) for publishing an advertisement criticizing CNN, which he perceives as being "biased, unsavory and underhand" towards his colleague, CNN correspondent Walter Rodgers. Actually the true facts presented in this advertisement were not only understated, but contained no direct criticism of Rodgers, although such criticism would be quite legitimate in many people's opinion! What makes Mr. Walker think the media should be above criticism?

To top it all, one can only gasp in disbelief at Walker's cheeky *totalitarian* demand that *The Jerusalem Post* gag "paid" dissent and criticism. This undemocratic proposal from a member of the media, the very profession which rejects censorship for itself, purportedly the "watchdog" of democracy is an insult to our intelligence.

Though I utterly disagree with the advert of "The Council for Peace and Security" of March 27, it has every right to be published. The only ads that should be censored or refused are those promoting racial hatred and intolerance, or inciting to crimes of violence and sexual perversions.

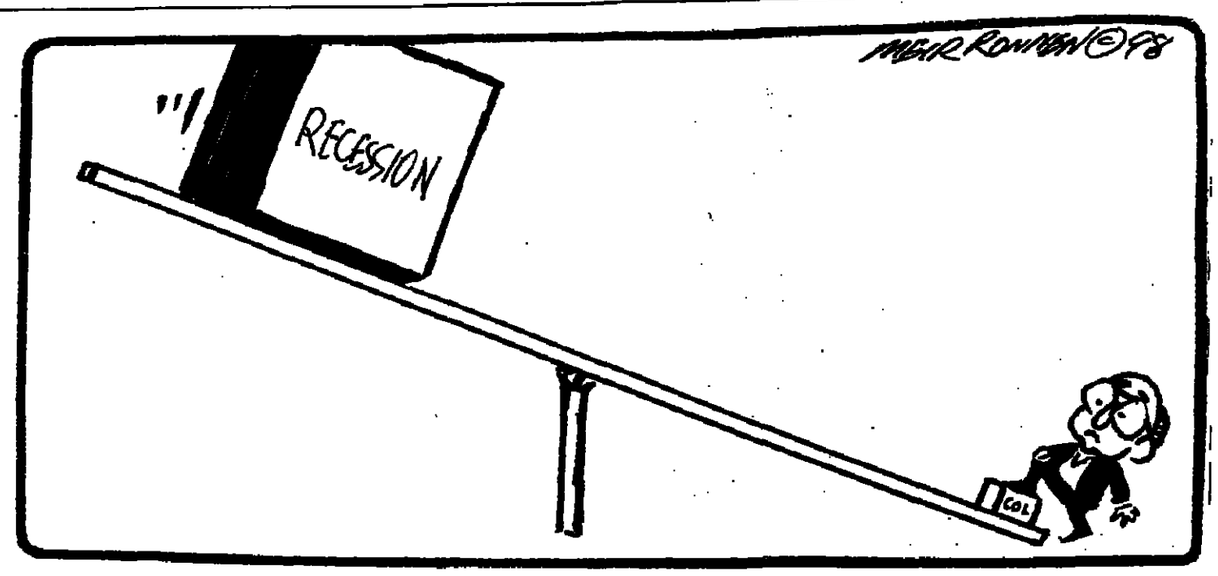
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FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On April 24, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported that World War I scenes of refugees besieging the relief offices were being re-enacted in Berlin where hundreds of applicants gathered outside the Palestine Immigration Office demanding visas to enable them to emigrate to Palestine. The enormous congestion was due to the fact that only one thousand certificates were available.

25 years ago: On April 24, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that a new period of tension between France and Israel appeared inevitable in the wake of the dispute over whether the French-built Mirage fighter bombers had been transferred from Libya to Egypt.

Alexander Zvielli



The abandonment of the Jews

MOSHE ARENS

On Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day we obey the biblical injunction "*Zachor*: Remember what the Amalekites did to you."

We cannot forget the many accomplices the Germans found among the Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians and Hungarians, nor the indifference with which most of the world watched the German attempt to exterminate the Jewish people. In effect, the Jewish people were abandoned to their tragic fate by the governments of nations engaged in battling Germany during World War II.

The story of two ships, loaded with refugees seeking a haven from the Nazi terror, symbolizes the refusal of countries throughout the world to grant a refuge – even if temporary – to the Jews fleeing the German murder machine. The *St. Louis* and the *Struma* were two among many such ships, barges and boats – all truly life boats – that sailed the seas seeking a safe harbor in which to discharge their human cargo.

In 1939, the 930 Jewish refugees from Germany on the *St. Louis* were refused entry to Cuba. As the ship sailed on to Miami in the hope that US immigration authorities would allow the refugees to land, it was shadowed by a US Coast Guard cutter with orders to prevent any refugees from disembarking. To pleas from the Joint Distribution Committee, the State Department replied that there would be no compromise of US immigration laws. The *St. Louis* was forced to return to Europe.

The Holocaust would probably not have happened, certainly not in its full dimension, had it not been for the world's indifference to the fate of the Jews

The *Struma*, a 180-ton Romanian vessel carrying 769 Jewish refugees, left Constanza for Palestine in December 1941. Overloaded and endangered by a leaking hull, the ship broke down off Istanbul. The Turks would not let the passengers land unless they received permission from the British to proceed to Palestine. The British refused and the Turks towed the *Struma*, which had lost its engines, out to sea, where it sank. There were only two survivors, who managed to swim to shore.

When the Warsaw Ghetto revolt erupted in April 1943 it was already what Churchill called "the beginning of the end" for Germany. Rommel had been beaten at El Alamein, American troops had landed in North Africa, the Germans had suffered a major defeat at Stalingrad, and German cities were being bombed day and night. The allies were winning the war on land, at sea, and in the air. At this very time it was already well known that the Germans were killing over 100,000 Jews every month, with the explicit aim of exterminating the Jewish people.

Much could have been done to slow, or possibly halt, this demonic campaign. But the Warsaw Ghetto fighters received no aid nor even a sign of encouragement. During the ensuing two years, until Germany surrendered in May 1945, halting the slaughter of the Jews never became a strategic objective of the Allies.

TO THIS day, it is incomprehensible that over 500,000 Hungarian Jews were taken to the gas chambers in mid-1944, after the war had essentially been won.

At the end of March, the Germans had decided to take over Hungary. One month later the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews to the death camps began. By then the Red Army was nearing the Hungarian border, the Allies had captured Rome, and all of Germany was under intense daily bombardment. Yet, in the following five months, over 500,000 Hungarian Jews were murdered.

The news reached the capitals of the world, as neutral observers in Budapest reported daily on what was happening. Requests to the Allies to bomb Auschwitz, or the rail lines leading to it, so as to impede the slaughter, were rejected out of hand. One man, Raoul Wallenberg, succeeded in saving thousands. It is an indication of what could have been done had the Allied governments taken action.

The Holocaust would probably not have happened, certainly not in its full dimension, had it not been for the indifference of the world to the fate of the Jewish people during those tragic years. It is in this context that it should be remembered, and it is this lesson that the world hopefully has learned.

The real heroes

ARIEL SHARON

There have been so many exciting moments in our country's history. Which should I choose?

The UN vote on November 29, 1947? The feeling that something at once great and awesome was about to take place. My heart pounded with the excitement of the unknown now approaching.

David Ben-Gurion's resounding voice as he declared independence?

The day on which we had our first full mobilization in December 1947?

The founding of Unit 101?

Taking over command of the paratroopers, the retaliatory operations, the 1956 Sinai Campaign?

Splitting the Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula in the Six Day War in 1967?

The day my division crossed the Suez Canal in the 1973 Yom Kippur War?

The sight of the thousands of Palestinian terrorists being forced to flee Beirut in the 1982 Lebanon War?

So many stops along the way, days full of excitement, how can I choose just one event?

So many people influenced me over the years. Who should I choose?

My father, Shmuel, an agronomist and researcher, an excellent farmer, who planted in me a love of the land and the country, and made me swear that I would never hand a Jew over to foreigners.

My mother Deborah, who through her courage, pride and hard work in agriculture throughout her life became a symbol on Kfar Malal, the moshav where I was born.

David Ben-Gurion, with his tremendous vision and determination? Moshe Dayan, with his physical courage and wit. Yigal Allon with his strategic approach and Menachem Begin with his unique approach to security issues.

Yitzhak Rabin as chief of staff and friend. Shimon Peres's creativity and Yitzhak Shamir's firm stand on Greater Israel. And so many others, particularly those who went bravely to the gallows.

Which of them should I choose?

AS I search among all these personalities and events, what do I recall as a truly special experience. I have chosen one picture, a picture which describes a terrible tragedy.

My platoon and I are stretched out beneath the olive trees beside ancient Hulda in the midday heat. Pre-battle reflections. We blend in with the pebbly soil as if we were an inseparable part of it. Deep rooted. The sense of a homeland, belonging, ownership.

The Gahal soldiers arrived unknown after surviving the horrors of the Holocaust. They fought unknown, fell unknown, and many of them have remained anonymous until today

Suddenly, close by, a truck comes to a halt and unloads new recruits.

They have a foreign appearance, they are somewhat pale. They wear sleeveless sweaters, gray pants, striped shirts. A mélange of languages. Names such as Herschel, Jan, Meitek, Peter and Yonzi were thrown in the air. They are so out of place among the olive trees, the rocks, the yellowing corn.

They had arrived directly from the death camps in Europe, across sealed borders, in boats bearing "illegal" immigrants, only to be sent once again to internment camps, this time to Cyprus by the British. From there they had been shipped directly to the front.

I looked hard at them. They undressed. Their flesh was white. They tried on the uniforms, struggling with the straps of their army pouches, assisted by the commanders who had just met them.

This all took place in silence, as if they accepted their fate. None of them shouted, "Give us time to breath after the terrible years we have just been through."

It was as though they understood that this was yet another stage in the final battle for Jewish existence. They obviously had no inkling that among the established community in Israel, too many people were tied up defending their own settlements. Despite Ben-Gurion's pressure, many had not yet even enlisted. And more than a few members of the moneyed classes of the period had sent their children abroad so that they would not be "swallowed up" by the war.

These soldiers were foreign recruits (Gahal) commonly referred to as "Gahaleitzim" in a disdainful tone. There were no songs sung for them and no one conversed with them around the bonfire. They were not imitated. They had no one waiting at home with whom to share their experiences; they had no homes. They were people from another planet, with experiences that were alien to us, youngsters like ourselves but hundreds of years older than we were.

IN Jerusalem's Mt. Herzl military cemetery, in the mass grave dug for our company, B Company, Battalion 32, Alexandroni Brigade, four of the 52 soldiers who fell in one battle were nameless.

For 50 years, whenever I have passed the headstone, I have stopped and wondered who they were, where they came from, who their families were.

Are any of those immigrant soldiers still alive? Has anyone ever looked for them? Perhaps they are still looking. I have no answer. No one has an answer.

Some of them had been through the horrors of the Holocaust as children and youngsters, surviving only to reach Israel a year or two before the War of Independence and join the fighting. I remember some of those who were under my command, on the eve of the war, at the agricultural school in Magdiel, and I shall mention some of those who were killed or injured.

Michael Klein, a handsome, strong young survivor from Hungary who fell in the battle at Nebi Samuel. Many years later his sister arrived in search of details, but who knew him? Who knew how he was killed?

And Joshua Mendelmacher and Israel Koren from Lodz in Poland. No one has visited their graves since the day they fell in 1948.

And there were those who were not killed, Shimon Leibovitz was seriously injured and Shimon Miudovnik was held prisoner for five years, between the age of 11 and 16, at various concentration camps. He was the sole survivor of six brothers and sisters, and he lived through the Buchenwald March of Death. Both served in the Palmah Harel Brigade and were wounded at Nebi Samuel.

I also recall a true war hero, Mordecai Doziminer, a hero of the battle for Latrun. He was killed after volunteering for an assignment from which it was impossible to return alive. Does he have any relatives?

And there were so many others like him, numbers imprinted on their arms, firebrands snatched from the furnace.

Fifty years have passed since then. Now, as we celebrate Israel's jubilee year, we honor the fallen, the army brigades and various forces, the Mahal (foreign) volunteers – fewer than the Jewish people should have sent, but nonetheless good people who came and volunteered.

I particularly wish to thank all those unknown soldiers who survived the upheavals of the Holocaust – a feat which required considerable bravery – who dreamed of reaching safety and when they finally arrived once again took up arms in our defense.

So many of them fell in battle.

They, the Gahal soldiers, arrived unknown, fought unknown, fell unknown, and many of them have remained anonymous until today. In my mind, they were the real heroes.

POSTSCRIPT

PRODDED BY angry correspondence from thousands of Americans, Merriam-Webster has assembled a task force to come up with new definitions for the word "nigger" and hundreds of other "offensive" words found in its collegiate dictionary.

Nigger is defined in the current *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* as "a black person, usually taken to be offensive." With only minor revisions, that definition has stood for nearly a century. But a nationwide campaign questioning the definition and the word's proper role in the English language has caused the dictionary publisher to take the unusual step toward redefining it.

"We are definitely looking at it very closely," said Deborah Burns, director of marketing for Merriam-Webster Inc. "It is very, very likely that there will be a change in the definitions of all offensive words."

The leaders of the effort to strike or rephrase its definition say Merriam-Webster portrays the word foremost as a synonym for black people while noting that it's a slur almost as an afterthought. The campaigners have threatened a boycott.

"We came to the conclusion that maybe our dictionary is not as clearly written as it could be," Burns said. A panel of lexicographers and other experts has been reviewing the definitions of hundreds of offensive words, she said. The words include racial epithets, body parts and profanity.

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word first as "Vulgar" and then as a "Negro or member of any dark-skinned people. An offensive term used derogatorily." *Random House* defines the word as "Disparaging and Offensive."

Merriam-Webster dictionaries list the oldest definition of a word first and the newest last. When the word nigger came into use four centuries ago it literally meant a black person.

IDF and the haredim

GERALD M. STEINBERG

The record of Israel's accomplishments would not have been possible without the strong emotional dedication of the Jewish people to the goals of Zionism. Inspired by Herzl's concept of political Zionism, Jews from all over the world devoted themselves to these goals. Motivated by ideological commitment and idealism, some began to return to Eretz Yisrael, while millions paid their annual dues to the Zionist movement and took part in rallies.

There was no government or external force to press them to take these actions, but rather they were motivated by the intense belief in the importance of the goals and the desire to contribute to the revival of the Jewish nation.

However, almost from the beginning, some groups did not share this idealism and sense of responsibility for the common fate. In particular, the haredim kept their distance from Zionism, and increasingly separated themselves from the Jewish people. Although there are many different sub-sects among the haredim – with different attitudes towards Zionism – most avoided service in the IDF.

What began as a minor concession, when David Ben-Gurion exempted a handful of yeshiva students each year from military service, has become a gaping hole in the national fabric. Each year, tens of thousands of otherwise draft-eligible haredim receive automatic exemptions. This has created a large resentment among the rest of the population. Both secular Israelis, and the non-haredi religious public are fed up with ballooning exemptions for these yeshiva students.

Responding, or rather capitalizing on this resentment, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak is preparing to introduce legislation to force conscription on the haredim, or at least some form of national service. Polls show that the vast majority of the haredi population is unlikely to vote for a Labor Party candidate, so there are no votes to lose in this proposal. Indeed, it is clear that Barak's proposal is designed primarily to revive sagging political fortunes.

SUBSTANTIVELY, the results of this legislation will be the opposite of its declared intentions. When the power of the state is used to coerce, this leads to resentment and heightened civil conflict. One of Israel's greatest failures is the product of government efforts to force immigrants to settle in remote development towns.

Similarly, the forced attempts to strip these immigrants of their original culture and religious heritage and create a "new" and secular Israeli were doomed to fail. Eventually, the political leaders learned that people must be allowed to choose their own homes, jobs, and lifestyles.

By the same token, Barak's proposal, if enacted, will only increase the haredi community's resentment and alienation, and will sharpen the divisiveness within Israeli society. If forced into the IDF, the haredim will make poor soldiers, lacking the ideological commitment and sense of purpose that was, and among many groups still is, characteristic of service in the IDF.

In a practical sense, after having served thirty years in the army, including as chief of staff, Ehud Barak surely recognizes that the best soldiers are the ones who are highly motivated. Barak himself volunteered to take part in the rescue of the passengers aboard hijacked aircraft and in retaliatory raids against Palestinian terrorists in Beirut. If he or any of the others involved in these missions had been forced to take part, they would certainly have failed.

At some point, without outside coercion, many young haredim will accept the need to rejoin the Jewish people and accept their share of the common burden

The only realistic solution to the haredi-IDF problem is a long-term effort designed to change the attitudes of the haredim towards their fellow Jews and Israelis, and regarding their obligations to the nation.

Haredim already live with very strong contradictions. On the one hand, they benefit from the economic successes and security provided by living in Israel (and they also suffer, no less than any other group, from the threats posed by terrorist attacks). At the same time, they are aware they contribute far less than others to the material well-being and safety of the state.

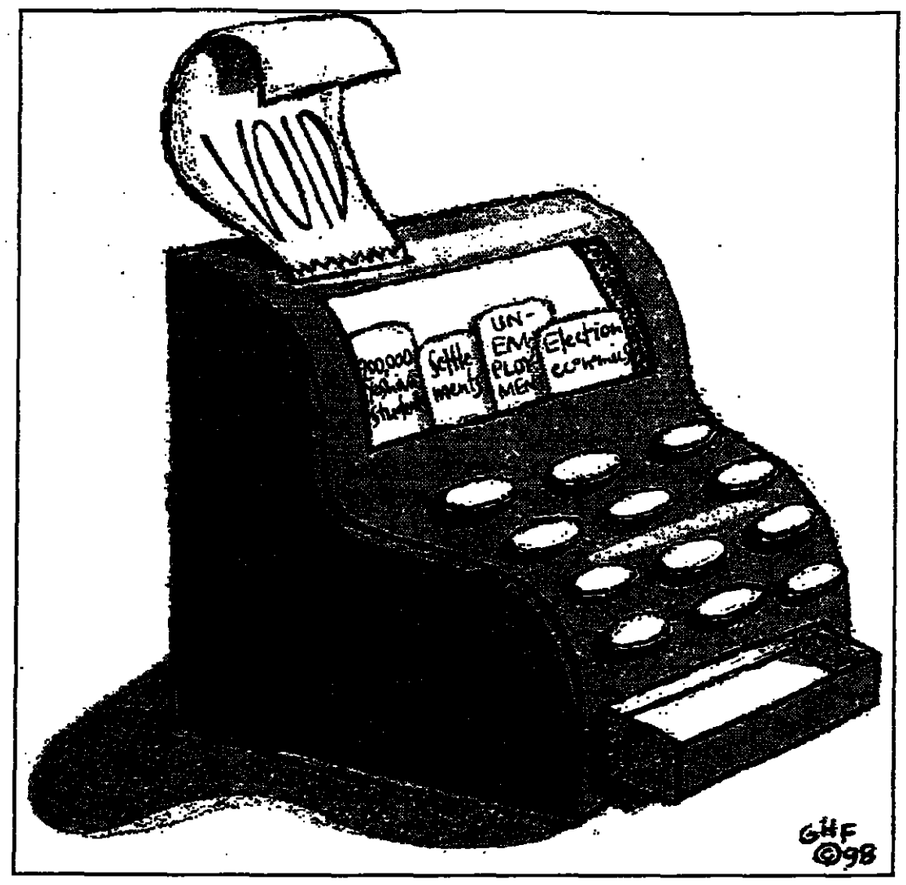
To resolve this moral contradiction, they comfort themselves, and attempt to sell to the others, the idea that by studying Torah (at least officially), these young men are also contributing to Jewish survival. In an environment of assimilation and ignorance of Jewish culture and tradition, they may even have a point.

However, it is clearly absurd to believe that the continuity of the Jewish people, and the spiritual survival of the nation, requires the annual addition of tens of thousands of haredi "students" who claim that their "profession is Torah" and do not have time to defend the nation.

There are many other religious Israelis who manage to combine both worlds successfully. It is also obvious that 50 years of ever-increasing numbers of yeshiva students have certainly not improved the spiritual level of the nation or of the haredim themselves.

The automatic army exemptions are a sham, and even they know it.

The moral contradictions will eventually have an impact on haredi attitudes and society. At some point, without coercion from the outside, many young haredim will accept the need to rejoin the Jewish people and accept their share of the common burden. This is the message Ehud Barak and other potential leaders should be sending, rather than talking about forced conscription and other abuses of state power.



Different priorities

MARK A. HELLER

Last month, another 10,000 families joined the ranks of those who will not be in much of a mood to celebrate Israel's 50th anniversary. The March increase in joblessness brings the total unemployment rate to 8.2% (as opposed to about 6.5% when this government came into office), and analysts expect that it will rise to 9%, or even 9.5%, by the end of the year.

Once upon a time, before the age of big government, the economy was something separate from politics, and governments were no more held responsible for bad economic performance than they were for bad weather.

But that was long ago, and even minimalist, laissez-faire politicians – like Binyamin Netanyahu – now acknowledge that government is responsible for providing the human and physical infrastructure, the fiscal and monetary framework, and the political atmosphere within which the market economy should operate. It is therefore not just a cheap shot to contrast the situation now with that of mid-1996.

Unemployment figures are a symptom of broader economic trends, which have almost all turned negative since the last elections.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, Israeli gross domestic product grew at an average annual rate of 6% between 1992 and 1995 – enough to catapult the Israeli economy to European levels; in 1996 and 1997, the average annual growth rate was 3.2%, and by early 1998, the rate had dropped to recessionary levels.

This slowdown was felt in almost every sector, but especially in tourism and construction. In 1992-1995, gross investment grew by an average annual rate of 7.7%; in 1996-1997, the average rate was 1.9% (in 1997, it actually dropped by 5.1%, and in the industrial sector, the decrease was 15%).

Even the government's major "accomplishment" – the decline in the inflation rate – is not really a sign of successful economic policy, but rather of declining demand resulting from high interest rates and slowed growth.

Of course, it would not be fair to lay responsibility for all these problems at the feet of the government. Tourist cancellations, for example, are caused, in the first instance, by terrorist acts, which also took place under the previous government, and the short-term effect is entirely predictable – in Israel as well as in neighboring countries such as Egypt.

A government that pays 200,000 yeshiva students to study is just buying a Knesset majority

And the decline in skilled immigrants from the former Soviet Union is as much a function of improving conditions there as it is of stagnant or deteriorating conditions here. It is also true that growth under the previous government was partly stimulated by budget deficits that were threatening to get out of hand and could not have continued even if it had been re-elected.

BUT this is no consolation for the 163,000 Israelis who are now out of work, the thousands more who may well join them in the next few months, and the many entrepreneurs and business owners who are also facing rather bleak prospects.

And it is vital to understand that this is a man-made problem, not an act of nature. A government constrained by coalition requirements as well as by its own ideology from moving ahead on the peace process cannot contribute to the expectation of future progress and stability that will bring back the tourists, or the immigrants, or the foreign investors.

A government that pays 200,000 yeshiva students to study is just buying a Knesset majority, not investing in the human capital of university and technical college students who are acquiring skills now in order to produce goods or services in the future that the rest of society and the rest of the world will want to buy.

And a government that spends money on settlements is diverting money from the educational training and physical infrastructure that increases the ability of labor to move to capital or capital to labor, i.e., from improving the competitiveness of the economy.

It is possible, indeed likely, that this government will conjure up some short-term gimmicks to deflect the wrath of the unemployed and the anxiety of their friends and relatives. Indeed, there are some instructive precedents, particularly in the realm of "election economics."

Perhaps the most famous was Yoram Aridor's last-minute tax reform that suddenly enabled Israeli workers to buy little 1300cc Subarus and persuaded them to vote Menachem Begin back into power in 1981.

Within a few years, of course, the country had soared into the stratosphere of hyperinflation and spent almost all its foreign currency reserves, but the main objective – getting re-elected – had been achieved.

Maybe the same kind of thing will work again. Or maybe the voters will understand this time that a return to stable economic growth really requires a set of priorities altogether different from those of this coalition, and that the only way to eliminate the underlying cause of these unemployment figures is to raise the unemployment rate – by one.

Middle Israel

AMOTZ ASA-EL

Eureka

Like Archimedes who exclaimed "I found it" after finally discovering how to reconcile flotation, gravity, and weight loss, Binyamin Netanyahu this week found his own way to keep afloat after having lost a cumulative 10 percent of his original coalition.

Unfortunately, what the prime minister said after having come forth with his discovery was not "eureka," but "Moledet."

Bibi's temptation, to be sure, is great.

First, a pair of solid Knesset votes during any future no-confidence vote is nothing to scoff at. After all, Moledet is not the kind of leper Meir Kahane was; nor is it any longer the farce it used to be back when it was represented by the flamboyant, not to say nut case, Rabbi Yosef Ba-Gad, whose gimmicks were an embarrassment to the entire parliament. If anything, Rehavam Ze'evi's current second-in-command, Benny Elon, is widely respected as a learned, diligent and, in many respects, even progressive legislator.

Secondly, Moledet's turbo-charged nationalism stops short of the illegitimate. While the faction does use tastelessly xenophobic rhetoric, it does not smoothly correspond to the neo-fascist labels which are often attached to it. Yes, it prefers – not unlike much of the Left – that Arab and Jew part ways, but unlike our various Kahane splinter groups and Europe's assorted Le Pen types, Moledet is careful to phrase all its nativist ideas in civic rather than racial or religious terms, and seems to stop short of fomenting violence.

Finally, Ze'evi himself, while not the average Middle Israeli's cup of tea, is no more awkward to host in a cabinet meeting than are, say, the equally militant Rafael Eitan and Ariel Sharon.

True, Ze'evi is the kind of general who while awash with post-'67 chauvinism caged, they say, a troupe of lions with which he would parade through camp before dusk; and surely, whoever nicknamed him Gandhi must have made the Indian pacifist's ashes flip in the Ganges. Yet at the end of the day, retired generals like Ze'evi, Eitan, and Sharon are basically local versions of those Prussian Junkers who longed for military discipline, social conservatism, and economic protectionism. They may be annoying, but granting these "give 'em-nothing" militants cabinet seats is no more illegitimate, or unwise, than it was for Yitzhak Rabin to bring "give 'em-all" Yossi Sarid into the thick of negotiations with Yasser Arafat.

Last time the Likud embraced Moledet it ended up losing power, facing Oslo and ceding Hebron

SO WHY, then, not say eureka now that Gandhi may be about to take his seat around the cabinet table? Because what may keep Bibi afloat might leave the peace process, and the rest of us, sinking. In other words, the problem with Moledet is not in its theoretical fantasies concerning an ethnic redistribution in the Holy Land and its environs, but its practical inhibitions when it comes to compromising anything Israeli to anything Arab.

Ironically, the latest coalition jockeying came just when Netanyahu merrily agreed to go to London for a second-redeployment summit.

London, for those who may have forgotten, is where King Hussein and then-foreign minister Shimon Peres hammered out in 1987 an agreement which could have averted the intifada and much of the damage subsequently inflicted on Israel through the Oslo Accords. Had Israel endorsed that agreement, it would have ceased to rule over West Bank Arabs before, rather than after, encountering the uprising which unnecessarily exposed the limits of our power. It also would have returned the Palestinians to the Hashemites' tutelage, rather than to the PLO's bosom.

The reason none of this transpired was the Likud's stubborn insistence that Israel compromise nothing. That is also what disharmonized a previously workable Likud-Labor partnership, and what three years later paved the way to Moledet's first brush with incumbency, when Ze'evi became a minister-without-portfolio in Yitzhak Shamir's last cabinet.

Moledet and the Likud rightly assumed that most Israelis favored in principle a greater, ethnically harmonious Israel. What they refused to acknowledge was that while most accepted that prospect's theoretical desirability, they also questioned its political feasibility.

Since that flat rejection of the 1987 London accord and the hollow Jordan-is-Palestine propaganda cacophony which accompanied it, with then-UN ambassador Netanyahu playing first fiddle – the Likud has endorsed Oslo, met Arafat, and ceded Hebron. Apparently it learned a great deal about the limits of Israeli power and Palestinian servility.

Moledet has not.

Now, joining hands with Ze'evi's territorial maximalists would mean the Likud has, after all, forgotten nothing and learned nothing since the days when it arrogantly shot down a Jordanian-dominated settlement which in comparison with its Oslo substitute would have been a panacea.

And if this logic doesn't impress Netanyahu, let him bear in mind that it wasn't long after veering to the far right that the Likud lost power. In retrospect, it was the ironic inversion of Labor's subsequent embrace of Meretz, and the ultimate Archimedian lever, pulley, and "place on which to stand" – in the opposition.

An enemy everyone can hate

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

Fifty years ago, a poor, ill-armed society prepared for certain war with hope and determination. Today a prosperous and powerful Israel confronts the future with profound malaise. Few euphoric celebrants will be grabbing strangers on the streets of Tel Aviv this Independence Day to dance the *hora*.

Above all, we are beset by a sense of deep divisions within our society. The cultural wars over *Tkuma* only emphasize how the once regnant Zionist mythology no longer provides a basis for social cohesion.

Once external threats fostered national unity. Today we cannot even agree as to whether former antagonists were our enemies or our victims, whether our cause was just or we constitute just another chapter in European colonialism.

The growing sense of deep societal cleavage gives rise to the temptation to base a new consensus around an enemy everyone can hate. (The traditional choice – the Jews – obviously won't do.) Though the haredim are a poor substitute for our Arab neighbors – at most a minor irritant, not a threat to life or limb – they appear the best we can do at present.

A recent Supreme Court decision provides a classic illustration of how haredim are delegitimized in order to preserve the illusion that a Zionist consensus still exists. In that case, the court determined that haredi youth groups are not Zionist enough to receive Education Ministry funding.

Bnos Agudat Israel, the largest of the haredi youth groups, has received funding – albeit minimal – from the Education Ministry for over thirty years. In 1996, the Education Ministry completed a rigorous survey of youth groups to determine the number of members in each. That survey – from which Bnos was originally excluded – revealed that Bnos was entitled to at least four times more money than it was then receiving, and that the two largest youth groups – Scouts and HaNoar HaOved v'Halomed – were receiving much more than they should have.

Bnos's very success in the ministry's survey sealed its fate. Almost simultaneously with the startling results, the ministry began drafting new funding criteria requiring, inter alia, that the groups "educate their members in the world view of Judaism and Zionism, . . ., and to view army service or parallel national service as an obligatory value."

Then-attorney-general Michael Ben-Yair objected to the proposed criteria, and agreed to their promulgation only after attaching his stipulation that the regulations permit funding of Arab youth groups advocating the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, as long as they recognize the sovereignty of the Knesset. Typically, he made no mention of haredim.

Homosexual youth are a favored minority; haredi youth are not

After promulgation of the new regulations, the largest secular youth groups brought suit in the Supreme Court challenging the ministry's continued funding of haredi youth groups. And last month, the Supreme Court ordered the haredi groups to return funds already disbursed to them by the ministry and those funds to be apportioned among the remaining youth groups.

NOW clearly youth groups, haredi or otherwise, have no entitlement to state funding. Where I come from youth groups sell cookies door to door to support themselves. But if the state chooses to fund ideological youth groups, it has no business distinguishing between the content of their ideologies, as long as they advocate no illegality. The American Supreme Court has repeatedly struck down statutes that attempt to condition government benefits on the expression of opinion or belief.

Yet the Supreme Court here, usually so eager to import "progressive" views from abroad, did not address or even notice the glaring government infringement on free speech in the ministry's regulations. Neither, apparently, did plaintiff's attorney Avigdor Feldman, one of the founders of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, or Meretz Knesset member Ran Cohen, who helped draft the ministry regulations. (For Israeli civil libertarians, freedom from religion and the religious seems to be the highest civil liberty.)

The court's decision was determined, not by principle, but by the identity of the parties. Thus the same court which recently created out of whole cloth an unprecedented "right" for homosexual teenagers to have their lifestyle celebrated on state television, ignored the rights of haredi teenagers to express their beliefs. Homosexual youth are a favored minority; haredi youth are not.

In his elegantly written opinion, filled with scorn for the haredi groups and the Education Ministry supervisors, Justice Mishael Cheshin assumed that the definition of Zionism today is still so clear-cut that he could determine from his own general knowledge that haredim are anti-Zionists and the other groups are good Zionists. Even a post-Zionist court still knows an anti-Zionist when it sees one. Evidence that haredi youth groups stress love of the Land and that its graduates are far less likely to join the Israeli diaspora would have been irrelevant for Cheshin.

Nor did he inquire as to whether the compliance of secular groups with the ministry regulations was subject to any closer scrutiny by the ministry than was that of haredi groups before ordering the returned monies to be disbursed to the secular groups. How, for instance, do those groups inculcate the value as Israel as a Jewish state – another of the ministry's requirements?

Actually that last question is no problem for a court that has long since determined that the term "Jewish state," enshrined in the Basic Laws, is a meaningless superfluity, synonymous with "democratic state." Still, one wonders, how Arab Scout troops are imbued with the values of Zionism or army service.

Interesting how a court usually so zealous in the protection of minorities, in this instance, led the baying hounds.

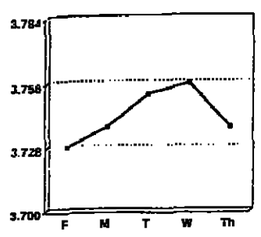
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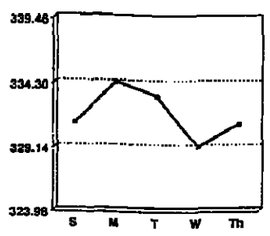
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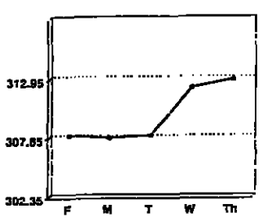
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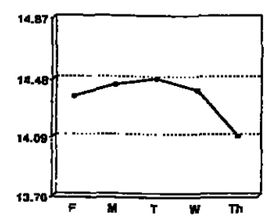
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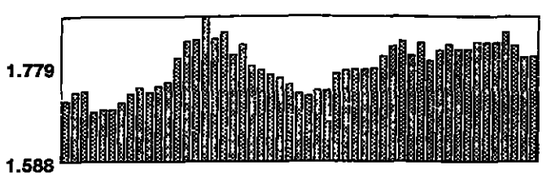
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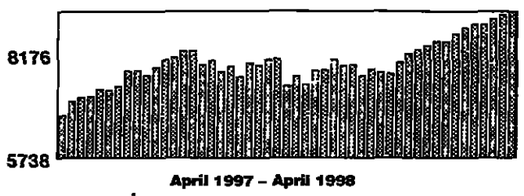


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BITS & BYTES

By NINA GILBERT

Tadiran Scopus wins $3m. project in Ukraine

Tadiran Scopus has won a contract, valued in its first phase at $3 million, to supply digital video equipment to the Ukrainian Space Agency, Ukracosmos, as part of a project to deploy satellite distribution systems for Ukraine's national television network.

The equipment is to be supplied in four months. Tadiran joined in an international consortium to compete in the tender, which includes Antech from Italy, which will coordinate the project, and Ukrainian manufacturers and service providers.

Tadiran Scopus is a subsidiary of Tadiran Ltd., the country's largest electronics company. It is a maker of digital video broadcasting products, including conditional access systems. Last year, the company decided to enter into direct sales activities, which resulted in the penetration of new markets.

Orbotech makes $3.8m. deal with Taiwan firm

Gold Circuit Electronics Ltd, one of Taiwan's leading printed circuit board manufacturers, this week purchased $3.8 million worth of optical scanning equipment from Orbotech. The deal follows a purchase six months ago of $1.7m.

The Taiwanese company said the equipment was purchased as part of the expansion of its production capacity.

Orbotech, the Yavne-based maker of automated optical inspection systems for printed circuit boards, has four subsidiaries abroad, including in Boston, Brussels, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

TTI to supply Brazilian cellular network

TTI Team Telecom has won a contract to supply the new Brazilian cellular telephone network with its Netrac management system. The award is TTI's second major contract in Brazil.

"The B-band cellular market in Brazil consists of ten new operation licenses that cover all regions of the country and represents one of the greatest opportunities in the communications market today," according to TTI CEO Meir Lipshes, who said the company aims to expand further in the Latin American market.

Canadians buy 20% of Meitav Software

A group of Canadian investors recently purchased 20 percent of Meitav Software Systems in a private placement valued at $1 million. The investment, the first in Israel by Amon Corporation of Toronto, will pave the way for the company to develop more software products for the Israeli financial market and the possibility of foreign activities.

NIS 100 bills most favored by Israelis

By Jerusalem Post Staff

One hundred shekel bills are the most popular notes, according to the annual report that the Bank of Israel Currency Department published yesterday.

The value of all NIS 100 bills used by the public was NIS 4.3 billion at the end of 1997, which is equal to 44 percent of all the cash in circulation. The value of all NIS 200 and NIS 50 notes in circulation amounted to NIS 2.9b. and NIS 2.2b. respectively.

The bank said that the number of NIS 100 bills in use equals some 36% of all notes, compared with only 20% in 1995. Despite the NIS 100 bill's popularity, NIS 50 bills make up 37% of all notes, down from 54% two years ago.

The total value of the cash in circulation (coins and bills) rose at the end of 1997 to NIS 10.4b. from NIS 9.2b. in 1996. It rose by an annual average of 4.3% in real terms, compared with a rise of 8.3% in 1997.

The volume per capita (the average amount of cash) held by Israeli residents stood at NIS 1,756 at the end of 1997, compared with NIS 1,601 in 1996. It should by noted, however, that the sum also includes cash held by the business sector and banks.

The central bank attributed this rise to falling inflation, saying that in times of low inflation the public holds more money in cash as it keeps its value.

The currency department also said that the "3,000 years to Jerusalem" coin, which was minted on Independence Day two years ago, won a prize as the "coin with the highest historical significance for 1996" in the annual coins competition held by *World Coin News*.

Fishman acquires 3.5% of IDB holdings for NIS 108m.

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Discount Investments sold a 3.5 percent stake in its parent company IDB Holdings Corporation yesterday to entrepreneur Eliezer Fishman for NIS 108 million.

Last December, Discount Investments announced the sale of another 9.5% of IDB to the American investment bank Goldman Sachs Group for NIS 280 million.

Discount received the holdings in its parent company in August as part of deal in which it sold its 26.7% holding in tool manufacturer Iscar to the Wertheimer family, in exchange for $130m. in cash and the IDB stake.

It has been speculated in the press that Fishman was interested in buying a stake in Israel Discount Bank, of which IDB holds 13.17%.

Sources close to the Recanati family, which controls IDB, said, however, that there are no talks about a possible sale of the company's holdings in Bank Discount to Fishman or anyone else.

According to rumors, Fishman, together with US investor Jeffrey Keill, is interested in acquiring control of Israel's third-largest bank. A consortium led by Keill and Fishman failed to win the tender to buy Bank Hapoalim last year.

Recently, a mysterious buyer started acquiring shares in Bank Discount on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. Market sources speculate that Keill and Fishman may be involved in the purchases.

Analysts said that Discount Investments is holding too much money in cash. The company holds already almost $200m. in cash and is expected to receive another NIS 580m. from contractor Yitzhak Tshuva for a 37.6% stake in Delek Israel Fuel Corp.

Most of the cash that Discount holds came from the sale of its stake in Iscar. The company raised another NIS 195m. earlier this year from the sale of its shares in Clal Israel to IDB Development Corporation.

Discount Investments has stated in the past that it is looking for new investments as it intends to focus mainly on communications, infrastructure, and financial services. Analysts said, however, that the holding company will have difficulty finding investments as profitable as Iscar.

IDB Holdings is one of the country's largest holding companies, with investments in electronics, communications, insurance, real estate and construction, banking and brokerage services, and a variety of industrial business.



Students protest corruption
An Indonesian university student performs a mock hanging to depict the students' recommended punishment for corrupt officials during an anti-government protest in Jakarta. (Reuters)

Cvalim sells unit for $55m.

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Cvalim, the Electric Wire and Cable Company of Israel, said yesterday it agreed to sell its cable manufacturing activity to a subsidiary of Cable Systems Holding Company for $55 million.

The deal comes only two months after Clal Industries & Investment announced the sale of 51 percent in Zion Cables United Works, Israel's second-largest cable manufacturer after Cvalim, to US-based Superior Telecom for NIS 90m.

"The American cable companies want to expand their activities by mergers and acquisitions," a source close to the deal said. "The activity of the local companies allows them to enter new areas."

Cvalim, which sold only the manufacturing activity, will continue to hold the buildings which will be rented to Cvalim Industries (EWC), the local subsidiary of Cable Systems, for an annual $670,000 during the first five years and for $1 million in the subsequent five years.

The source said that the company plans to use the money for other investments, which he declined to specify.

The deal is expected to be completed by June 30. Cvalim said it expects to take a capital after-tax loss of NIS 15m.

Cvalim produces and markets cables for the telecommunications, power and electronics companies. The company reported earlier this month net income fell 11.7% to NIS 15.1m., from NIS 17.1m. a year earlier. Net sales decreased 7.8% to NIS 385.5m.

Cable Systems will continue to manufacture in Israel and agreed to retain the 500 local employees.

Check Point profit up 140% in 1st qtr.

By NINA GILBERT

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd. reported a 140 percent increase in first-quarter net income to $15.5 million from $6.4m. in the same period last year.

First-quarter revenues were up 125% to $30.5m. from $13.6m. However, revenues were up only 4% compared with the fourth quarter, causing the share price to drop as much as 18% when trading opened on the Nasdaq in New York yesterday.

Earlier this month, Check Point made its first acquisition, of MetaInfo of Seattle, in a deal worth $27.5m.

The company also established an office for Middle Eastern regional sales in the first quarter.

Check Point, based in Ramat Gan, produces network security and traffic management solutions, including its FireWall-1 – which protects networks against Internet intrusions, and new traffic management product FloodGate-1.

Microsoft's executive vice president Steve Ballmer, who was on a three-day visit here this week, said the company has begun developing products that will compete with Check Point.

This week Check Point was named by Dun and Bradstreet as one of the best performers among Israeli companies for 1997, with the sharpest increase in exports at 160%. In 1997, Check Point's revenues rose 160 percent to $82.9m. from $31.8m. the previous year.

Net profit rose 164% to $40.2m. from $15m.

Stanley Works buys ZAG for $117m.

By NINA GILBERT

The Stanley Works, the Connecticut-based maker of hardware store supplies, signed an agreement yesterday to buy 90 percent of ZAG for an estimated $117 million in cash.

ZAG, the Rosh Ha'ayin-based maker of plastic products established in 1987, will operate as a subsidiary of Stanley and remain based here.

CEO and founder Zvi Yemini will hold the remaining 10% of the shares and continue in his position after the sale, as will the rest of the management team.

Some 30% of the company is publicly held via the Nasdaq, and the deal is subject to a shareholder vote.

As a part of the deal, the Ramat Gan-based Technoplast Industries will sell its entire 15.2% stake to Stanley, but its production agreement with ZAG will remain intact.

Since 1993, ZAG has been making and producing plastic storage products – including tool boxes, bulk storage containers, shelving systems and parts organizers.

The products are sold through major home centers and mass merchant retailers in nearly 60 countries, including the US Home Depot chain.

ZAG reported revenues of $63.6 million in 1997.

The Stanley Works, founded in 1843, had revenues of $2.7 billion last year and announced a major restructuring and a new strategy that emphasizes product and brand development.

Japan releases plan to resolve bad loan problem

By NATHAN WESTBY and CHIAKI MOCHIZUKI

Japan's ruling party will propose the government form a panel to mediate disputes between banks and debtors to clean up the 77 trillion yen ($592 billion) in bad loans held by Japanese banks.

Agreements reached through the panel would be binding and have the force of a court decision. Banks would benefit by being able to deduct losses from taxes, and debtors would gain by having debts forgiven.

"Other than people who think they're going to die, or who have given up, almost all debtors will want to take advantage of this plan," said Kozo Yamamoto, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party committee that came up with the plan.

The mediation panel is the centerpiece of an LDP plan to get banks to dispose of bad loans, which are limiting lending to healthy companies and dragging on a moribund real estate market.

The proposal will be included in a package to boost the economy that the government will release today.

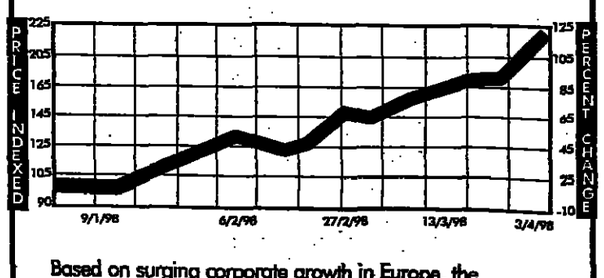
"This plan possesses all the tools needed to solve the bad loan problem," said Okiharu Yasuoka, chairman of the LDP panel.

The proposal also includes using postal savings and life insurance funds to invest in a yet-to-be-developed market for asset-backed securities. (Bloomberg)



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Azorim	2980	1
Azorim Prop.	600	-0.8
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Bayan	3000	0.7
Bayside 1	39100	-1.5
Bayside 5	202000	0
Bezeq	1031	0.2
Blue Square	4100	1
Bromine	3480	-1.7
Ciel Electronics	58300	-0.4
Ciel Industries	1992	0.1
Ciel Insurance	4340	3.7
Ciel Israel 1	108.4	2.7
Dan Hotels	900	0
Dankner	2090	-0.5
Derban	812	0.9
Dead Sea Works 0.1	915	0.5
Delek 0.1	14230	0.7
Delek Car	598	-1.2
Development Mort	24400	1.2
Discount Bank	441	3.4
Discount Inv.	10080	0.5
Elbit 0.003	1220	1.8
Elbit Imaging	3050	-2.6
Elbit system	4990	0.8
Elco	2120	-1.8
Elco Industries	3940	-2.9
Electra	15300	0.1
Electra App	1585	-0.4
Elite Ind. 1	2380	-2.9
Elite Ind. 5	11490	-0.4
Elron 0.003	6510	0.5
FBI 5	67800	-1.2
First Int'l 1	57100	-0.9
First Int'l 5	2855200	-1.7
First Int'l Mort	54900	0
Formula	14290	0.8
General Bank	11030	1
Granit Hacarmel	729	1.8
Hadarim Prop.	6300	-1.6
Ham-Let	2500	0
Hapoalim 0.1	11020	-0.8
Harel Mishmar 1	3900	-1.3
Harel Mishmar 5	19050	0.5
I.D.B. Dev.	8350	2.4
I.D.B. Holdings	8560	3
IDCO	2090	0
Ind Bldgs	596	-1.3
Israel Chemicals	438	-1.5
Isracal Corp. 1	23800	-2.5
Isrotel	702	0
Jotava	766	-0.9
JCT	31.3	-2.2
JEC	1980	-1.6
Kitan	395	-1
Knafaim	3950	-5.3
Koor	67000	0.2
Leader	1448	0
Leumi Insurance	232	2.6
Leumi Mortgage	88200	-0.3
Liraz	5400	2
Makhteshim	3330	1.2
Mamen	632	0
Matab	3900	-2.1
Mehadrin	12950	-1.2
Mel Eden	1693	1.9
Melisaaron	1015	-0.9
Menorah Ins. 1	1835	0.8
Milenior	1580	-0.6
Mishkan	61700	0
Mizrahi Inv.	11800	0
NATSWA REGULAR	1997	0
Nice Systems	16700	1.7
Oil	7930	-2.6
Orbit	1800	1.1
Ormat Industries	489	2.8
Osem Industries	1532	-1.5
Petrochemicals	2080	-3.4
Phoenix Ins. 1	6150	-0.5
Poalim Inc.	13000	-0.2
Prop & Bldg	26300	-0.8
Saf Industries	1910	0
Solel Bone	4400	-0.2
Supersol	1194	0
Tadiran	15400	0.1
Tambour	690	-4.8
Telshot	195000	0.2
Tempo	1355	0
Teva	16450	1.8
Urdan	297	0.3
Wire and Cables	1478	2.9
Ytong Industries	886	0.2

KARAM SMALL CAPITALIZATION TASE ISSUES

	LAST	CHANGE*
Boulous GD	359	0
Abtec	2.4	0
Abudi	51	-1.9
Ace-Spade	88	0
Ackerstein Bond B	162	0
Ackerstein Ind.	410	-0.2
Ackerstein Zvi 1	1310	0.2
Ackerstein Zvi 5	5570	0
adalcom	38.5	0
Adenim	3852000	0
Adler	113.5	0
Adelna	121.5	0
Adumim	188	0
Africa Hotels Bond B	86.2	0.2
Africa Hotels Warrant 2	45	-8.7
Africa Hotels Warrant 3	2	0
Africa Israel Hotels Bond A	130.9	-0.1
Alsek Ind	844	0
Agis Warrant 3	29	0
Agis Warrant 4	540	-5.6
Agtek Int'l	340	-0.3
Agri Investments	242	0
Al-Ben	151	0
Al-Ben Bond A	112.5	0
Alhe c2	104.5	0.8
Alhe w6	170	0.8
Alliance	745	-2
Alon	250	0
Alony-Hetz	578	5.5
Alony-Hetz Bond A	255	0
Alrod	248	-10
Alrod Warrant 1	8.7	0
Alrov Bond D	77.5	0.8
Alrov Warrant 5	385	0
Alumir	196	0
Alumit	4653	0.3
Amigur	190	2.2
Amilec	196	-6
Amirell Warrant 1	13.3	20.9
Amnat	847	0
Ampa Investments	129737	0
Analyst BMS	1300	-1.5
Angel Trade	364	0
Angel Trade Bond A	149.5	-0.3
Angel Trade Bond B	107.5	0
Angel Trade Bond C	61.5	-1.6
Angel Trade Warrant 2	1.2	0
Apcos	390	1.5
Apcos warrant 1	294	1.4
Applicom	2540	2.8
Aracell Warrant 2	520	0
Arad	1800	0
Arad Towels	914	2
Arazim	83	0
Arazim Bond 1	236	0
Argaman	245	0
Arieden	1049	0
Arpal	469	0
Aryt	110.9	-1
Ashkelon Plywood	699	0
Ashkelon Plywood Bond 1	227	0
Ashkelon Plywood Bond 2	125.5	-0.4
Ashtad	432	0.2
Ashtad Bond A	148	0
Ashot	319	-1.5
Ashot Bond A	169.5	0
Ashpras	81	0
Ashtrom Bond 1	164.5	1.9
Ashtrom Bond 2	151.5	-0.7
Ashtrom Ind.	508	0
Ashtrom Prop.	191	0
Astrom P Bond 1	97.5	0
Asrom p warrant a	91.7	-1.9
Astrum Bond C	94.5	0
Astrum Warrant 2	35.2	-1.9
Atlon	74	0
Atmor	1921	0
ATX	167	0
ATX Bond A	149	0
Atzmon	289	-1.1
Aura	5950	-4.3
Avarot	400	-5.5
Avarot Bond A	154.2	-0.5
Averbuch Formica	994	0
Aviv	369	1.1
Aviv Bond 1	148.5	0
Aviv Bond 2	89	0
Avner	1.9	0
Avrot Bond 2	90	0.2
Avrot Warrant 2	78	0
Aydon	608	-0.5
Azimuth	583	3
Azorim Properties Bond 3	171.5	0.3
Azorim Warrant 13	418	1
Azorim Warrant 5	96.1	-0.3
Azorim Warrant A	550	3.6
Azorim Warrant B	504	0
Badash Bond 1	43.9	0
Bakil	340	0
Balanitha 1	264	-0.4
Balanitha Bond A	128	-0.4
Balanitha Warrant 2	8.7	-10.3
Balron	4169	0
Bama'asal	68.5	0
Bama'asal Bond A	133	0
Bar	399	0
Bar Bond A	111	-0.9
Barad	264	0
Barkowitz	553	0
Barkan	655	-1.9
Barpal	108	-1.4
Barsel	154	0
Bartal	154	0
Bazomet Masha	163.5	0
BaySide Bond 2	88.6	0
BaySide Warrant D	2290	0
Bek Shemesh	1530	0
Belson	247	0
Ben Yakar Bond A	169.5	0
Ben Yakar Bond B	89.5	-1.1
Ben Yakar Gaz	4184	0
Ben Yakar Warrant 2	13.7	-41.2
Berman	180	0
Bezalk Bond 3	108.4	0.4
Bezalk Bond 4	1075	-1
Bezalk Warrant 3	434	0
Bezalk Warrant Bond 3	226	3.1
Bilu	1411	0
Bilu Bond A	177	1.4
Binar	599	8
Biri	265	0
Bioloe Bond B	75	0.7
bioloe gaq warrant 1	42	0
Bonel Tichon	590	0
Bonjour	521	0
Boulous Brothers	139	0
Boulous Brothers Bond 1	282	3
Boulous GD Bond A	123.5	0
Brand	97	-1
Bsl	84.5	-0.6
Brok Side	24	-0.8
Brosh	106.5	0
Building Bank	1899	0
Building Resou.	3578	-2
C Holdings	594	0
C Holdings Bond 5	90.5	0
C Holdings Warrant 3	15.8	-8.7
Caesarea 1	5670	0
Caniel	3200	0.9
Capital	949	0.5
Capital Bond A	118.5	0
Carpiso	399	-1.2
Carpi	519	0
Carmel	553	0
Carmiel	512	-3.2
Castro	632	0
Catalera 1	456	0
CDI	207	-2.4
Cementseal Bond A	75	0
Cemensal	527	-0.2
Centra	142	2.2
Centra Bond 1	128	0
Chem	824	-1
Cheyun Computers	149.5	0
Chemipal	440	2.8
Chim-Mr	507	-1.9
Ci Systems	227	0
Cidab	186.5	0
Ciel Computer Warrant 3	0	0
Ciel Computers	15640	-4.3
Ciel Industries Bond	198	-1
Ciel Israel 5	485	0
Ciel Retail	58088	0
Cohen Bank	196.5	-1
Cohen Dev.	313	-11.5
Cohen Mill	203	0
Cold Storage 1	1578	0
Cold Storage 5	7980	0
Cold Storage and Supply Bond 1	243	0
Compl	204	-2
Compl Warrant 1	19.8	0
Computta	170	-1.2
Combach	370	0
Comtrans	679	0
Consal	990	0
Contractors	17505	0
Coral Beach	879	0
Credit Line	3.8	0
Credit Lines Bond A	34.2	0
Cyclone 1	1860	-0.7
Cyclone Bond 1	240	-0.4
Cyclone Bond 2	149	0
Dafron	1460	-7.2
Dafron Bond 1	241	0
Dailo	2	0
Dan Rent-A-Car	755	-2
Dan Rent-A-Car Bond A	184	0
Danber 1	4000	0
Danber 5	18500	0
Danber Bond A	283	0
Danber Resources	6667	0
Danber Resources Bond B	162	0
Danber Tech.	6500	-0.5
Danber Technologies Bond A	150	-0.7
Danel	56	6.7
Danel Bond A	87	-0.6
Danel Personnel	2800	-1.9
Danel Warrant 2	577	0
Danimer Bond 1	206	-0.5
Danimer Bond 2	140.5	-0.4
Danimer Bond 3	92.1	0.4
Danimer Warrant C	465	0
Danimer Warrant D	93	0.5
Danly	681	0.4
Darod	85	0
DARBAN BOND 2	89.3	0
Darban Bond A	230	0
DARBAN W2	195	3.2
Darban Warrant 3	395	0
Daren	128.5	0
Darfon	148	-0.3
Dash investcont	954	0
Data	588	0
Decision Systems	478	1.3
Degem Systems	510	-4.1
Delek Drillings	8	0
Delek Oil	1466	0
Delta 1	3420	1.8
Delta 3	10600	4.7
Destiny	1285	0
Digel	116	0
Dimint	1692	2.9
Dolev	419	4.1
Dolev Bond A	136.1	0
Dolev warrant 1	53.7	-4.3
Domicar	443	0
Domicar Bond	148	0
Dor Chim	400	0
Dorc w1	146	0
Dorsa	57.5	0
Dorsf cl	95	0
Dori Engineering	463	0
Dori Engineering Bond A	135.5	0
Dovrat Bond A	134.8	0.3
Dovrat Shrem	1395	-1.1
Dovrat Shrem Warrant 3	60	0
DSL	1460	0
Dubek M	2	0
Dubek S	2.2	0
Dunitz	309	0
DYG Industries	463	0
E & M-Computing	1161	-1
Edgar Filtani	94	-0.5
Edgar Industries	196	-1.5
Edgar Inv. Bond C	85	0
Edgar Inv. Warrant 5	24	-4.2
Eitar Bond A	98	0
Elni	205	-1
Elsam	335	-2
Elscint	1883	3.4
El Cardi	575	0.7
El Cardi Bond 1	154.5	0
Elad	516	1
Elad Bond A	169.5	-0.3
Elad Bond B	139.5	-0.4
Elad c3	89.5	0
Elad w5	46	0
Elbit Computers Bond B	124	0
Elbit Computers Warrant 2	886	-5
Eldan Tech.	165	3.1
Electronics Line	492	0
Elgar	4688	0
Elishav	398	-1
Elitech Ind.	878	-1
Ellem	306	-3.3
Ella	437	0
Ella Bond A	140.5	0
Elran	3465	-2.5
Elron Warrant 2	2797	0
Emek	135	0
Emyte	699	0
Engel Const.	774	0
ESC	2230	-1.8
Eshed Robotech	213	0
Even	401	1.3
Evergreen	3330	0.3
Evros Warrant 1	1028	0
Excelence	2077	0
Export Inv.	869	0
Extra	146	0
Feldman	153.5	-4.1
Feldman Bond A	148	0
Feldman Ind.	186	0.8
Feldman Warrant 3	13.7	0
Fertilizers 1	123	0
Fiscshwanger 1	12500	0
Fiscshwanger 5	56900	-0.2
Fidelit	2835	0
Five J Jewelers	258	0
Five J Jewelers Bond 2	125	0
Formica Source	191	0
Fratarom	322	0.6
Gahelet	18800	-0.5
Galcom	268	0
Galran	1277	0
Gama	207	0
Gematronic	579	1
Gambit	1470	0
Gan Shmuel Bond A	1144	-1
Gan Shmuel Warrant 3	500	3.6
Gan Shmuel	1455	0.3
Ganel Hader	380	0
Gap Development	108	-1.4
Gap Holdings	231	-0.9
Gap Warrant 2	16	-1
Gazit	725	3.6
Gazit Bond B	156.5	2.5
Gazit Bond C	121.5	-0.4
Gibor Bond 1	65	0
Gibor Bond A	82.5	0
Gibor Sabina	82	0
Gibor Sport	805	-3
Gibor Warrant 2	129.9	-11.6
Gilboa	119.5	-0.4
Gilco	1365	0
Gilkal	1298	0
Gilot Otem Oil	95	4.3
Glob Fit	880	-3.3
Golan	572	0.2
Gold	478	-2
Golden House	362	-0.5
Golden House Bond 1	243	0
Golex	142	0
Granit Bond	147.5	0.6
Granit Bond 2	151.9	0.7
Green Software	400	2
Greenberg	913	5.3
H. Electronics	76	0
H. Mor	954	0
Habas	2928	0
Habas Bond 1	196	-0.4
Hader 1	20559	0
Hader 5	59033	0
Hadera Ins. 1	974	0.9
Hadera Ins. 5	4100	2.4
Hadarim Bond1.	108.6	0
Hadarim Warrant1	1050	1.9
Hagal	396	0
Hagal Bond B	148.5	0
Hamelior	909	0
Hanel	7.1	-4.2
Harel Bond A	435	0
Hasin Esh	638	0
Hasan	202	3.1
Hashof 1	212	0
Hashof Bond A	141.5	0
Hayel	1470	-4.8
Hayel Bond1	341	0
Hayel Bond2	250	-8
Hayel Warrant 1	82.9	0
Hed Arzi Music	338	0
Hiron 1	10456	-6
Hiron 5	43438	-6
HL Service Bond 2	177	0
HL Service Bond 3	143.5	0
HL Services	1989	0.3
Hod	145	0
Hot	659	0.5
Holit	130	0
Home Center	5880	-0.2
Hydrolics	143	1.4
IBS Industries	576	0
IBS Warrant 1	69.5	0
Ilan Gat	184	0
Ilan Gat Bond A	142.5	0
ILDC Bond B	409	-1
ILDC Hotels	184	0
ILDC Hotels Bond 1	70	0
ILDC Hotels Warrant 2	384	-2.3
ILDC Insurance	130	0
ILDC Insurance Bond A	1382	0
Inbco	66.1	-1.2
Ind Bld Warrant 3	25.8	0
Ind Bldgs R1	284	0
Ind.Dev.Bank C		
Ind.Dev.Bank CC	2850	0
Ind.Dev.Bank CC 1	2869	0
Ind.Dev.Bank Pref	1943	-0.4
Independance Mort	97604	-0.5
Interconsens	793	0
Intergamma 1	4683	0
Intergamma 5	16699	0
Iscar	1982	0
Ispro	3570	0
Isracolor	457	0
Israel Corp. 5	104000	-0.1
Israel Lightenge Bond 3	134	0.4
Israel Wire & Cables Bond C	1757	-0.2
Ivalon	1237	0
Ivalon Bond B	258	0
Ivalon Bond C	88	0
Ivgumco	3.3	0
Ituran 1	5440	0
Ituran 5	25000	0
Jaras Bond A	250	0
ISTA LINES	2039	0
Itay	2400	0
Itay Bond 1	65	-0.2
Itay Warrant 1	888	0
Itay Warrant 2	17	0
Jakora Bond A	180	0
Jaysoon	187	-0.5
Jaysoor Bond A	107	0
JEC Bond B	91.5	-0.5
Jerusalem Mort	196.9	1
Jerusalem Mortgage Bond 16	158	0
Jeunesse	30.2	0
JOEL	104	-1.9
JOEL Bond 1A	228	0
JOEL Bond 2	118.4	-0.5
JOEL Bond A	228	0
JOEL Warrant 3	2.7	0
Kadimani	170.5	0
Kadouri	306	0
katriee bond b	85	0
katriee warrant 1	77	-1.3
Kahti	1173	0
Kalkalit Bond A	83.5	0
Kalkalit warrant 2	309	-8.8
Kamour	548	1.3
Kamour Bond G	128.5	0
Kamsept	1100	5.5
Kanat Warrant G	1.1	0
Kanicel	38.2	-9.9
Kanticel Bond A	51	1
Kardan 1	445	0
Kardan 5	2000	0.5
Katz	126	0
Katz Bond A	64	0
Kedem Chemicals	3900	0
Kedem Chemicals Bond 2	230	0
Kenaf	336	0
Kesher	760	0
Kesher Bond A	148	0
Ketar	557	0
Kinol	1332	0
Kinol Bond A	265	0
Kinz	340	0
Kinneret	228	0
Kisch Kinur	162.5	0
Kishrei Tasta	1027	0
Kitai	436	-0.5
Kitai Bond A	152	0
Kitai Bond A	106	-0.5
Kitai Warrant 1	4.5	12.5
Klil Ind. 5	7100	-1.4
Koor Bond 5	151.2	-0.1
Kopel	214	0
Kopel Bond 1	234	0
La Nationale Bond A	148.5	0
La Nationale Pref	102	1.5
Lachem	4705	-4.8
Lasonit	838	2
Lapidot Oil Exploration	1.4	0
Lapidot Oil Explorers	72	0
Lasers	435	0
Lavtav	597	0
Leznick Bldg	459	0
Lisznick Comm Ctrs	131.5	-1.9
Lisznick Commercial Centres Bon	118	0.4
Lisznick Ind Bldgs	330	0
Lisznick Industrial Bldgs. Bond	133	0
Leader Warrant B	68	0
Lego	450	4
Leumi R4	98.2	1.9
Leverthal	373	0
Levi	280	0
Levi Bond A	135	0
Levi Bond B	84.5	0
Levi Warrant 2	88.6	0
Levinstein Bond A	89.5	0
Levinstein Warrant 2	501	2.2
Levinsein	1256	0
Liber	392	-0.3
Libon	1500	0
Lifshir 1	169	-0.9
Lifshir 5	701	-0.3
Ligad	577	0
Ligad Bond 1	154	0
Lighterage 1	296	0
LIMS	236	0
Lipman	3150	0
Lipski	2700	0
Lipski Bond A	170	0
Linz Bond A	184.3	-2
Lodan	153.5	-1
Lodzia 1	1474	0.3
Lodzia 4	6075	0
Lohot Galil	33.2	0
Lohot Galil Bond 1	198	0
Lumir	3463	0
Ma'ariv	1986	-0.7
Ma'ariv Bond A	121.5	0.4
Ma'ariv Warrant 3	2.7	0
Machteret	1180	0
Magal	1253	-1
Magnell Bond A	130	-1.5
Magnell Bond B	120	0
Magnell Bond C	78.5	-1.3
Magnell Warrant 3	145	2.8
Mail	784	-0.5
Magarn	175.5	5.1
Magarn Bond A	171.5	0
Magam Bond B	123.5	0
Magev	259	0
Magma	48.4	0.4
Magma Warrant 1	0	0
Magor 1	2000	3
Magor 5	8900	0
Magor hldgs. Bond B	82	0.6
Magor hldgs. Warrant 2	640	0
Magor hldgs. Warrant A	21.7	0.5
Maiol	383	-1
Mail	73.5	0
Malibu 1	860	0
Malibu 5	3950	0
Malibu Bond B	170.3	0
Malta	721	0
Man	126.5	0.4
Man Bond A	298	0
Mantur	437	0
Marathon	109	0
Marathon Insurad	115	-0.9
Mario Lisznick Constr. Bond 1	168	0.6
Mario Lisznick Constr. Bond 2	144	5
Maritime Bank	1815	-3.3
Maritime Bank Bond A	197	0
Maritime Bank Bond B	138.3	0
Mashav	810	-3
Mashbir	814	-0.5
Mashov	575	-2.3
Mashov	134.5	0
Mashov Marketing Warrant 1	6	-4.8
Masam	1364	0
Mater Warrant 1	468	-1.7
Maxima 1	340	0
Maxima 5	1481	0
Mazpak	629	0
Med. Hotels	68.5	0
Medtechnica	813	0.4
Medtechnica Bond A	128	0
Medtechnica Bond B	79	0
Medtechnica Warrant 2	210	0
Mediterranean Hotels Bond A	98	-0.5
Megason	57.5	0
Meimad	404	-0.2
Meir Ezra	2490	0
Meir Ezra Bond B	238	-0.4
Melal	384	0
Melisaaron Bond B	88.1	0
Melisaaron Warrant 3	47	-1.1
Mendelson	254	0
Menolim	60	-0.8
Menorah Ins. 5	8330	0
Mercazit	892	-1.8
Mercazit Warrant 2	70	0
Merkaz	171	-11.1
Meytavit	450	0
Middle East Tube	398	3.9
Middle East Tube Bond A	109	0
Middle East Tube Warrant 2	27	0
Millenior Bond A	150	0.7
Millenior Bond B	76.5	0
Millenior Warrant 2	225	0
Minmar	123.5	0
Mini Line	583	1.2
Minrav	12740	-2
Mirage	210	-1.9
Mirage Bond A	123.5	-0.4
Mirage Warrant 1	90	-0.7
Mirconik	69	0
Mishmeret	19	0
Mishpaat Bond B	98	0
Mishor Bond 2	150	0
Mishor Hatsof	396	1.8
Missouri	117.5	-2.1
Mivtach Shamir	3220	0.8
Mivtach Shamir	1400	0.7
MM Engineering	121	0
MM Engineering Bond A	105.5	-1.4
Modcell	726	0
Modi'in	1.9	0
Moffet	225	-1.3
Moffet Convertible Bond AAA	316	0
More Plastic Ind.	337	0
Moshkovitz	178	8.5
MTI Computers	471	0
Mul-T-Lock	575	-0.6
Multi Senter	223	0
Nachshon Fund	50	-2.9
Naphtha	39.8	2.1
Naphtha Oil Exp.	23.6	1.3
Nalsur	619	-0.5
NATSWA BOND A	99	0
Navigator	321	0
Navigator Property	542	2.1
Nechushtan Bond B	69	0
Nechushtan Prop.	167.5	7.1
Nechushtan Properties Bond A	123	-0.4
Nechushtan Warrant T	21.8	4.8
Negev Cassava	193.5	0
Nehushtan 1	826	1.2
Nehushtan 5	4585	2.2
Neot Arviv	7300	0
Nessuf	540	0
News Arbel	63.5	9.2
Nevlim Hotels	385	4.9
Nevtot	848	0
Nia	316	-0.6
Nikuv	1500	0
Nisco	2203	-1
Nissan	225	-0.4
NMC	339	-1.2
Noga	1503	-5
Noga Ingerene	102	4.1
Nordan	12.9	0
Nordan Tech.	483	-2.3
Norbulk	694	0
Norbulk Bond A	143	0.4
Nur	83	0
NYP	882	0.5
Oceanit	315	0
Ocell Bond A	175.1	0.3
Ocil Bond B	174.5	0
Ocil Bond C	85	0
Ocil Warrant 2	1000	0
Ocisva	761	0
Olek	173.5	0
Oler Bro	6885	-0.5
Olfa	917	-0.5
Ogden	61	0
Orsitex	601	-8.8
Oil Fields	1.3	0
Ok-Dok	218	-0.9
Omn	282	0
Ormat Tech	265	0
Oshir	456	-1.7
Oppenheimer	88	0
Optrom	101	0.5
Orasys	3689	0
Oraya	272	0
Orsat Bond A	157.5	0
Orda	3630	-0.3
Orda Bond 1	171	-3.1
Orav	543	-3
Orsis	147.5	0
Orize	460	0
Ortize Bond A	90	0
Ortize Warrant 2	87.5	0
Ormat Industries Bond D	128	0
Ormat Industries Warrant 5	128	-4.7
Orisl	500	-6.8
Oscar Hashiton	20400	1.5
Oz	242	6.5
Oz atide	940	0
Packer Steel	5150	-3.1
Patzuch	505	0
Pama	641	0
Pamata	2515	1.2
Pan Dor	297	0
Pardes	788	0
Pardes Bond A	62	-0.8
Passport	2488	0
Paz Oren	372	0
PCB	1510	1.2
Pdan Investment	58.5	5.4
Peleg	109.5	0
Perclase	1114	0.7
Phoenix Ins. 5	20800	0
Pica Plast	445	-1.3
Pinros	135	2.7
Pinros Bond A	137	0
Pitot	948	0
Plason bond a	94	0
Plason warrant 1	340	0
Plasson	3580	-1.1
Plasto Sac	820	0
Plasto Shack Bond A	85	0
Plasto Shack Warrant 2	125	0
Plasto Shack Warrant 3	1	0
Poalim Inv. Bond B	99.5	0
Poalim Inv. Warrant 3	2390	0.8
Poalim Investments Bond A	132.6	0.2
Poalim Warrant 3	493	-3.4
Point of Sale	6950	0.4
Polak	220	1.4
Polgat A	250	1.8
Polgat B 4	850	-2.1
Polgat Bond B	172.5	-1.4
Polygon	266	1.1
Polygon Bond 2	211	0
Ponz	294	-1.8
Ponz Warrant 1	102.5	-2.4
Port	199	0
Poseidon	100	1.5
Pri Haemek	18.1	0
Pri Haemek Bond A	97.9	0
Pritzker	254	0
Pritzker B

	LAST	CHANGE*
Texas Instrmnts	82.25	-1.75
Texas Utilities	40.125	-0.6875
Textron	79.625	-0.8125
Thiokol	51.875	-1
Thomas & Betts	58.3125	-0.9375
ThreeCom	34	-1.0625
Time Warner	77.4375	+0.1875
Times-Mirror	59.75	-0.3125
Timken	35.5	-0.5625
Torchmark	47.6875	-1
Tosco Corp	35	+0
Toys R Us	28.375	-0.375
Transamerica	115.5	-0.9375
Transco Energy	67.625	-1.8125
Travelers Grp	60.75	-1.5
Tribune	65.5625	-2.0625
Triton Energy	40	+0.375
TWA	10.375	+0.0625
Tyco Labs	56.1875	-0.375
Tyler	11.0625	+0.75
UAL Corp	90.5625	-0.0625
USG Corp	54.5	-1.3125
UST Inc	30.1875	+0.1875
USX-Marathon	36.6	-0.625
USX-US Steel	40.375	+1.125
Ultramar Diam	34.0625	-0.1875
Unicom Corp	30.9375	-0.4375
Unilever PLC	41.3125	-0.4375
Unilever NV	73.25	-0.5625
Union Camp	60.8125	-0.4375
Union Carbide	49.9375	-1
Union Pacific	55.75	-0.375
Unisys Corp	21.75	-1.125
USAIR Group	77	-1.375
USF&G Corp	23.5625	-0.6875
US Home	46.25	+1
US Surgical	30.6875	-0.5625
US Trust	72.375	-0.125
US West	52.6875	-0.125
United Tech	98	+0.5
Unocal Corp	41.4375	+0.1875
VF Corp	50.3125	-0.25
Valero Energy	33.5875	-0.4375
Varian Assoc	49.5625	-2.375
Viacom Inc	54.25	-0.625
Vishay	20.0625	+0.25
Vulcan Materials	115.313	-2.6875
Wachovia	86.5	-2.25
Walgreen	34.4375	-0.25
Wal-Mart Stores	51.1375	-0.0375
Warner-Lambert	185.375	-2.4375
Wash Gas Light	27.0625	-0.0625
Washington Mutu	72.5625	+0.0625
Washington Post	517.875	-12.125
Waste Mgmnt Inc	33.5625	+0.375
Wellens-Johnson	27	-0.625
Wells Markets	35.75	-0.3125
Wells Fargo	374.438	-5.6875
Wendy's Intl	22.6875	-0.5
Westvaco	30.75	-0.375
Weyerhaeuser	58.6875	-1.3125
Whirlpool	71.5	-0.25
Whitman	21	-0.0625
Williams Co	32.75	+0.375
Winn Dixie Stos	38.5	-2.1875
Woolworth	24.375	-0.3125
World Comm	44.375	-0.75
Worthington Ind	18	-0.0625
Wrigley	82.75	+1.6875
Xerox	108.813	-0.6875
Yellow Freight	19 6875	-0.0625
Zenith Electron	4.0625	+0
Zero Co	31.5625	-0.125

LONDON

Allied Domecq	823	+2.5
BAT Inds	565	-0.5
BT	653	+4
BTR	202	+1
Barclays	1776	-20
Bass	1095	-23
Boots	918	+11
British Airways	825	+4.5
Cable & Wire	-	-
Comm Union plc	1120	-42
Diageo	689.5	-1.5
General Electric	497	+17.75
Glaxo	1588	+5
Halifax	833.5	-3.5
HSBC (75p shs)	1857	-38
ICI	1084	+1
Land Securities	1049	-8
Lloyds Bank	989.5	-32
Marks & Spencer	560	-8
NatWest Bank	1165	-15
Prudential	812	-35
Reuters	860	+25
Sainsbury	478	-3.5
Shell Transport	438.5	-4.5
Unilever	621.5	+1.5
Zeneca	2486	+15

PARIS

Accor	1570	-20
Air Liquide	1126	+14
Alcatel Alsthom	1099	-21
Euro Disney	9.45	-0.35
Michelin B	369.4	-7
Moulinex	180.7	+4.1
Paribas	645	+1
Pernod Ricard	411	-0.6
Peugeot	1020	+17
Saint Gobain	970	-7

FRANKFURT

Bayer	78.4	-1.5
Daimler-Benz	177.6	-5.2
Lufthansa	41	-0.4
Mannesmann	1418	-25
Metallgesellschaft	38.2	-1
Volkswagen	1377	-58

SOURCE: S&P COMSTOCK (DATE 24-APR-98)

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

	Last	Change
Sal (Basket) (1)	4.0048	0
U.S. Dollar (1)	3.737	0
British Pound (1)	6.23	0
Deutsch Mark (1)	2.0865	0
French Franc (1)	0.6221	0
Japanese Yen (100)	2.867	0
Swiss Franc (1)	2.5205	0
Canadian Dollar (1)	2.511	0
Italian Lira (1000)	2.111	0
Jordanian Dinar (1)	5.2505	0

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

	Last	Change
DJ Industrials	9143.33	-33.39
DJ Transport	3631.09	-50.48
DJ Utils	281.32	-3.3
DJ Comp	2931.69	-23.11
NYSE Indust	715.76	-4.27
NYSE Transport	524.32	-8.54
NYSE Comp	390.55	-6.07
S&P 100	541.15	-5.03
S&P Spot Index	1119.58	-10.42

OTHER MARKET INDEXES

	Last	Change
FTSE 100	5898.1	-33
Tokyo Nikkei	15761.6	+0.7
Singapore all-share index	381.06	+0.56
Hong Kong Hang Seng index	10918.9	-58.5
Israeli Index	295.83	-4.45
Paris CAC 40	3822.13	-12.94
DAX	5360.65	-28.29
Madrid	894.36	-11.77
Swiss Market Index	7265.5	-43.4
Sydney	2977.8	+21
Milan	1583.46	+13.93

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

	Last	Change
Pound: spot	1.6644	-0.0075
Jun.future (CME)	1.6602	-0.0076
D-mark: spot	1.7985	+0.0043
Jun.future (CME)	0.5579	-0.0018
S-franc: spot	1.4892	+0.0019
Jun.future (CME)	0.676	-0.0022
Yen: spot	130	-0.36
Jun.future (CME)	0.007739	+1e-005
CanDlr: spot	1.4361	+0.0053
Jun.future (CME)	0.6873	-0.0015
AusDlr: spot	0.6552	+0.0031
Jun.future (CME)	0.6541	+0.0018
F-franc: spot	6.0285	+0.0131
It Lira: spot	1777	+2.5
Nig: spot	2.0034	+0.0027
AusStrlg: spot	12.5731	+0.0575
Rand: spot	5.0575	+0.0125
ECU: spot	1.0098	-0.0038

US COMMODITIES

	Last	Change
Cocoa (May) (CEC)	1699	+27
Coffee (May) (CEC)	138.6	-9.4
Wheat (May) (CBOT)	292.75	-2.75
Soybean (May) (CBOT)	643.5	+2.75
Sugar (May) (CEC)	8.15	-0.04
Orange juice (May)(CEC)	94.75	+2.05
Bonds Jun.future	119.936	-0.1875
S and P Jun.future	1126.5	0

LONDON COMMODITIES

	Last	Change
Cocoa (May) (LCE)	1072	+11
Coffee (May) (LCE)	1855	-123
Brent crude oil (May)(IPE)	-	-

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

	Last	Change
Silver: spot	6.3	+0

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

	Last	Change
Gold (Apr)	314.5	+0.9
Silver (May)	6.286	+0.022
Platinum (Apr)	421.9	-4.8
Palladium (Jun)	315.85	+7.4
High-grade copper (May)	0.846	-0.0025

LONDON METAL FIXES

	Last	Change
Gold AM fix	314.6	+3.4
Gold PM fix	312.75	-0.05
Silver fix	632	+1

Month in parentheses signals contract exp. date
(Spot market listings are from approximately 23:30 Israel time. All others are closing quotes.)

SOURCE: S&P COMSTOCK (DATE 24-APR-98)

TASE rises led by IDB Holding

Tel Aviv

Stocks rose yesterday for the first time in three days, led by holding company IDB Holding Corp. after Discount Investment Corp. sold a 3.4 percent stake in the company to Israeli investor Eliezer Fishman.

IDB Holdings shares gained 3.1 percent to 85.6 shekels, helping the Maof Index of 25 largest companies to gain 0.56 percent to 330.99.

Discount Investment sold the IDB stake for NIS 108 million ($29.2 million), or NIS 82.5 a share, to a private company controlled by Fishman, who owns real estate and communications businesses. Discount Investments has wanted to sell its holding of IDB since obtaining the shares last year, said a Discount spokesman.

"The market likes what Fishman does because he usually succeeds in his investments," said Shmulik Shkedy, a trader at Pacific Mediterranean Investments. "Whatever he touches he usually profits from."

Discount Investment, which has interests in industries such as telecommunications and investment banking, added 0.6 percent to 100.8.

Israel Discount Bank, the country's third-largest bank, advanced 3.5 percent to 4.41 shekels. *Ha'aretz* reported that unnamed market officials are speculating Fishman and US bank executive Jeffrey Keil want to purchase control of the bank, a portion of which is owned by IDB Holdings. Keil denied he was talking with IDB in the report.

An initial drop in indexes was led by the largest two banks, which extended declines after Merrill Lynch & Co. downgraded its purchase recommendations on the companies.

Bank Leumi closed unchanged at NIS 7 after dropping as much as 1.6 percent. Bank Hapoalim, the largest bank, dropped 0.7 percent to 10.32.

Europe

UK stocks were mixed as slowing economic growth and the dwindling hope for a series of mergers depressed retailers and banks. A weaker pound boosted British Steel Plc, Smiths Industries Plc and other exporters.

Engineering stocks and building material suppliers rallied as the pound fell as much as 2.3 phennigs against the mark, reducing the cost of British exports abroad.

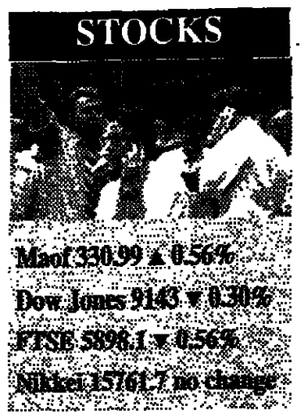
"The most interesting aspect at the moment is that we are seeing quite a rotation out of some of the winners of the last year or so and into the manufacturing export side," said Job Curtis, who helps manage 15 billion pounds ($24.9 billion) at Henderson Investors.

The benchmark FT-SE 100 Index slid 33.0 points, or 0.56 percent, to 5898.1. Among the banks, Lloyds TSB Bank Plc slid 31.5 pence to 969.5, National Westminster Bank Plc fell 26p to 1,165 and HSBC Holdings Plc declined 34p to 1,861.

"Everyone is waiting for a big merger between two financial companies," said Savvas Savouri, an equity strategist at Credit Lyonnais Securities. Until that happens, he said, it's unlikely the FT-SE 100 will improve upon the 16 percent rally it has posted this year.

By contrast, British Steel rose 7.5p to 159.75, Smiths Industries advanced 76.5p to 886.5 and TI Group gained 29.5p to 579. Among other exporters, the building material supplier RMC Group Plc gained 38p to 1045, Pilkington Plc leaped 4.5p to 128 and BPB Industries Plc rose 29p to 404.

Exporters gained as the pound fell to 2.9954 marks from 3.0005 Wednesday and from a high of 3.1102 on March 31, making UK goods more competitive in international markets.



Asia

Tokyo stocks closed marginally higher in lackluster trading, the day before the government planned to release details of its latest attempt to revive Japan's faltering economy.

The benchmark Nikkei Stock Average of 225 selected issues gained 0.15 points, closing at 15,761.69.

South Korean stocks fell to their lowest level in four months amid warnings that government efforts to restructure the country's debt-ridden financial industry could lead to bank shutdowns.

Stocks also fell in Indonesia, Thailand and Hong Kong, where HSBC Holdings Ltd. and China Telecom (Hong Kong) Ltd. pushed the Hang Seng index down to a six-week low. Singapore's benchmark Straits Times index rose, pacing gains in Malaysia, Australia and the Philippines.

Hanil Bank, Commercial Bank of Korea and Cho Hung Bank led an 8.2 percent plunge in Korea's banking index, its biggest one-day drop since March 5. The decline was fueled by a report from state-run Korea Development Institute that suggested the country may face a second financial crisis if it doesn't speed up bank reform.

"Some banks will inevitably have to fail under the current circumstances," said Kim Young Joon, who manages a $107 million fund at Seoul Investment Trust Co. (Bloomberg)

Wall Street

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks sank yesterday in a wave of profit-taking, with technology shares suffering the heaviest damage after leading this week's record-setting advance.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 33.39 points – or 0.3 percent – to 9,143.33 after surrendering a 32-point gain that would have topped Tuesday's record close of 9,184.94.

Broader indexes, some of which set new highs every day this week, posted sharper losses than the Dow, which was bolstered by better-than-expected profit reports from Disney and Procter and Gamble.

The gains by those companies were negated by steep losses from J.P. Morgan and American Express, which had risen sharply on Wednesday amid another round of merger speculation in the financial sector.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq composite index sank nearly 2%, halting a four-session streak of record highs.

Microsoft led the Nasdaq retreat after rallying in advance of late Wednesday's profit report, which exceeded forecasts, but warned of slower revenue growth.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 5-to-2 margin, with 837 up, 2,159 down and 510 unchanged.

NYSE volume totaled 651.97 million shares, vs. 695.41 million in the previous session.

The Nasdaq composite index fell 36.15, or 1.9%, to 1,881.46.

Yen to 1-week high as Japan seen buying currency

The dollar fell to a one-week low against the yen on concern Japan will buy yen to prop up its currency, after the government releases details of an economic package today.

With expectations the economy-boosting measures to be outlined today won't convince investors Japan will avoid recession, the Bank of Japan could sell dollars to bolster the yen, traders and analysts said.

When the plan was first announced earlier this month, the fifth such package since October, it was met with skepticism by investors, forcing the Bank of Japan to sell some $11 to $22 billion to defend the yen, traders estimated.

"Once again there are fears of intervention," said Glenn Davies, chief economist at Credit Lyonnais. "It's become a big political issue."

The dollar fell for a third day to 130.42 yen from 130.75 late Wednesday in London. It was little changed at 1.7929 marks, from 1.7930. It rose to as much as 1.7974 Wednesday after several Bundesbank officials damped expectations for an increase in German interest rates.

Recent signs of expansion in the German economy, and speculation rates there will have to rise to bring them in line with higher rates elsewhere in Europe before the start of single currency in January, offset comments from central bank officials suggesting rates will stay on hold.

"The market doesn't trust the Bundesbank comments and has taken the view that there is a good chance of a rate hike," said Davies.

Comments from Japanese officials stoked concern the central bank will act to defend the yen. Haruhiko Kuroda, director general of the ministry's International Finance Bureau, said the yen is still excessively weak and that investors should be aware of the risk of a stronger yen, Nikkei English News reported. Eisuke Sakakibara, vice finance minister for international affairs, said today's package will show Japan's determination to bring about an economic recovery, NEN said.

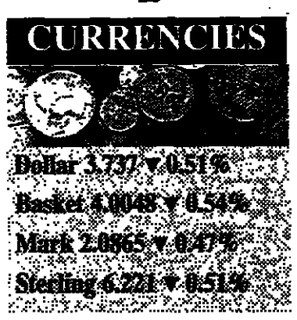
"Whenever those officials have said investors should be aware of the risk of a stronger yen, intervention has tended to follow," said Takeshi Imamichi, a manager for foreign exchange at Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. "There's persistent speculation about intervention [today]."

Many analysts doubt Japan's latest fiscal package, the fifth since October, will be enough to bolster the Japanese economy. Earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund forecast the economy won't grow at all in 1998, while the Organization for Economic Cooperation said it will likely shrink 0.3 percent. Japan's discount rate stands at a record-low 0.5 percent.

By comparison, the US federal funds rate on overnight loans between banks is 5.5 percent, making dollar-denominated deposits more attractive.

In other trading, the dollar fell against the British pound, though an unsourced report in the *Financial Times* that a majority of the central bank's rate-setting committee voted to keep interest rates on hold this month, breaking a four-four split in February and March.

The *FT* said Charles Goodhart switched sides at the April 8-9 Monetary Policy Committee meeting. He was one of the four who voted for an increase at the two previous meetings, requiring bank Governor Eddie George to use his vote to break the tie and keep rates on hold at 7.25 percent. (Bloomberg)



Coffee drops as Brazilian crop seen boosting supply

Precious metals

Palladium soared to its fifth straight record as delays in exports from Russia, which usually supplies 70 percent of world demand, caused concern that supplies of the metal may dry up.

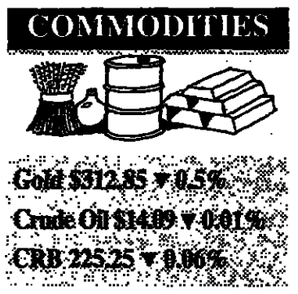
In June last year Degussa warned car makers and other customers of possible supply disruptions after Russian export delays left inventories critically low.

Similar delays have occurred this year, as Russia has failed to export any precious metals since the beginning of the year. Palladium for immediate delivery rose $9.75 to $389.75 an ounce.

Energy

Crude oil rose after forecasts that US gasoline demand growth during the coming summer driving season will rise to its highest level in a decade.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency forecast gasoline demand in the US — the world's largest energy-consuming nation — will rise 1.8% this year, the largest year-on-year rise in a decade. Brent crude oil for June delivery rose 18 cents to $14.28 a barrel.



Others

Coffee fell amid expectations that a bumper crop from Brazil, the largest grower, will replenish supplies of arabica beans in the second half of 1998. Brazil's Tristao trading company said the country will produce 36.5 million 60-kilo bags of coffee, the highest forecast yet from a Brazilian company.

Coffee for July delivery fell $34 to $1,882 a metric ton on the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange. Copper slipped from its highest closing price in 5 months amid persistent concern that falling demand in Asia offset expectations of rising demand in Europe.

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News expect the Japanese government to report a 16.6% decline in retail sales for March. Copper for three-month delivery fell $18 to $1,870 a metric ton on the LME. (Bloomberg)

US bonds fall as orporate sales hurts prices

US bonds fell for a fourth day, pushing yields to the highest in seven weeks, as the $15 billion in corporate bonds sold this week created a temporary glut of securities.

"There's so much supply in corporate bond land that people are selling Treasuries to hedge their exposure or to raise cash to purchase the new debt," said Randall Roy ther, who manages about $4 billion of money market securities at Harris Investment Management in Chicago.

Companies including General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Credit Co. and GTE Corp. raised about $15 billion this week, taking advantage of low interest rates and robust demand from investors.

More sales are on the way, including a $1.5 billion sale from Level 3 Communications Inc. The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond fell 14/32, or $4.38 per $1,000 bond, to yield 5.99 percent, the highest since March 6. The two-year note's yield rose 1 basis point to 5.59 percent. Also weighting on bonds was speculation that some money managers were shifting out of long-term securities and into inflation-indexed bonds.



Bonds briefly recovered after the government reported that a bigger-than-expected jump in jobless claims for last week, offsetting the previous week's decline.

"Labor conditions look like they are pretty steady," said Dan Seto, an economist at Nikko Securities International Inc.

Bond investors have little reason to worry that the jobs market is heating up after the report, he said.

In one of the week's only economic reports, the government said the number of workers applying for first-time unemployment benefits last week rose by 29,000 jobs to 317,0000. That compares with the 307,000 claims forecast by analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News.

Treasury bond yields climbed 11 basis points this week, as some investors sold government securities to make room for the new corporate debt. In addition, Wall Street firms arranging the corporate bond sales often sell Treasuries to protect against losses in case interest rates rise before the sales are complete.

"Buying corporate bonds has been the only thing people are interested in this week," said Mark Mahoney, a government bond strategist at UBS Securities. (Bloomberg)

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CommStock Trading Ltd.
Futures, Options, Stocks, Bonds and Mutual Funds
34 Ben Yehuda St., Jerusalem
Tel. 02-624-4963 Fax. 02-625-9515
http://www.commstock.co.il
E-mail: commstock@pobox.com

Pacific Mediterranean Capital Markets Group
- Stock broking
- Equity research
- Money management
- Corporate finance

Tel. : 972-9-9585877
Telefax : 972-9-9585896
E-Mail : meiras@trendline.co.il
Contact : Elan Levi

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (20.4.98)

Currency (deposit for:)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar ($250,000)	4.770	4.800	5.090
Pound sterling (£100,000)	5.550	5.540	5.620
German mark (DM 200,000)	2.180	2.280	2.700
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.060	0.190	0.560
Yen (10 million yen)	—	—	—

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (23.4.98)

	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS Buy	Sell	BANKNOTES Buy	Sell	Rep. Rates**
Currency basket	3.9721	4.0362	—	—	4.0048
U.S. dollar	3.7071	3.7669	3.64	3.82	3.7370
German mark	2.0686	2.1020	2.03	2.14	2.0865
Pound sterling	6.1802	6.2799	6.07	6.37	6.2300
French franc	0.6170	0.6270	0.60	0.64	0.6221
Japanese yen (100)	2.8479	2.8879	2.79	2.93	2.8671
Dutch florin	1.8369	1.8666	1.80	1.90	1.8533
Swiss franc	2.4986	2.5389	2.45	2.58	2.5205
Swedish krona	0.4833	0.4911	0.47	0.50	0.4878
Norwegian krone	0.4983	0.5064	0.48	0.52	0.5027
Danish krone	0.5424	0.5512	0.53	0.56	0.5471
Finnish mark	0.6816	0.6926	0.66	0.71	0.6876
Canadian dollar	2.5918	2.6337	2.54	2.68	2.6110
Australian dollar	2.4213	2.4604	2.37	2.50	2.4401
S. African rand	0.7328	0.7447	0.66	0.75	0.7387
Belgian franc (10)	1.0034	1.0196	0.98	1.04	1.0122
Austrian schilling (10)	2.9410	2.9885	2.89	3.03	2.9660
Italian lira (1000)	2.0929	2.1267	2.05	2.16	2.1110
Jordanian dinar	5.2140	5.2981	5.15	5.50	5.2505
Egyptian pound	1.0500	1.1400	1.05	1.14	1.1024
ECU	4.0910	4.1570	—	—	4.1251
Irish punt	5.2111	5.2952	5.12	5.37	5.2565
Spanish peseta (100)	2.4340	2.4733	2.39	2.51	2.4567

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

CURRENCY

Continued from Page 1

Tax experts also said that for immigrants, the practical implications of such a policy shift are likely to be marginal.

"A personal tax base does not mean that any income in any location is automatically taxed," said Yoram Gabbai, a business consultant and former Treasury budget director.

The cabinet is expected to discuss the currency liberalization plan on Sunday. Then a press conference, possibly also on Sunday, will be held to officially launch the plan.

"We can announce the principles, general rules and certain details," said a Treasury official, who conceded that the program will not be entirely ready for the official announcement.

Treasury officials claim the delay would in part be attributable to disputes between them and the central bank.

"The issues are very complex, and even at this stage the plan is not finalized. The Bank of Israel is trying to say 'look, here's the program and these are its principles.

"From our perspective, until we announce it officially there can be alterations; that's why at no point have we published, or commented on the program or its contents," the official said.

A senior central bank source said a Sunday announcement "is very improbable."

The central bank proposals, which would lay the ground for the shekel to become a fully convertible currency, include permission to:

- Hold foreign currency here, without any restrictions.
- Open bank accounts abroad and transfer cash overseas in any currency.
- Purchase apartments in Israel in foreign currency.
- Unlimited use of credit cards abroad.

Another key disagreement does not concern the new proposals, but one announced in August 1997 and scheduled for implementation on May 1.

A top official close to the reform deliberations explained this sticking point involves a plan to remove restrictions on foreigners dealing in shekel options and futures-trading via means of a commercial bank.

Presently, foreigners are prevented from dealing in futures which extend beyond a month.

"We've spoken to commercial banks about this and it was agreed we'd press ahead, but now the Treasury is objecting with regard to the procedures for reporting [such transactions]," he said.

Intense media speculation about the contents of the package has caused considerable uncertainty in Israel's money market, with the shekel losing almost 2% against the dollar in a single day's trading two weeks ago.

Yesterday the dollar's representative rate stood at NIS 3.737, compared to NIS 3.602 on March 1.

Meanwhile, amid heightened criticism of the government's handling of the macroeconomy in general and the central bank's tight rein on monetary policy, the Central Bureau of Statistics yesterday said industrial production grew at an annualized two to three percent in January and February, according to initial figures.

This followed no growth in the second half last year and 2% growth during all of 1997.

This data excludes the diamond industry, which is going through a tough period, given the sharp downturn in demand from the Far East.

Furthermore, the data points to a 1% increase in the overall number of hours worked during the same period.

Diplomatic magic or sleight of hand?

Has British Prime Minister Tony Blair charmed Israel into bending its long-standing refusal to let the Europeans mediate talks with the Palestinians?

Herb Keinon reports

Flush from his triumphant brokerage of a framework peace agreement for Northern Ireland, British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived in the Middle East this week. On a charmed roll, he appeared at first blush to have worked some minor diplomatic magic.

On the first day of Blair's Jerusalem visit, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said at a joint press conference that he was prepared to "go to any location, and possibly to London, to try and advance the process."

This immediately gave way to talk of a London summit, with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, Netanyahu and Blair.

The magic was not in putting together an Arafat-Netanyahu parley, that trick has been done before, but rather in getting the Israelis to agree to accept some diplomatic input from the European Union.

The same Europe had infuriated Israel last year when it drafted the Luxembourg Declaration that committed Europe to "enhancing its support to Palestinian institutions in east Jerusalem."

The same Europe had adopted the Venice Declaration in 1980, calling for self-determination for the Palestinians – a euphemism for statehood – and active PLO participation in peace negotiations. Both ideas were deemed downright anti-Israel by Jerusalem at the time.

The same Europeans have also traditionally been viewed by Jerusalem as too biased and pro-Palestinian to deserve any real role in the peace process.

Alfred Tovias, an international relations professor and deputy director of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Helmut Kohl Institute for European Relations, says that Europe's engagement in the Middle East in 1998 is far different than in 1980.

"Eighteen years ago, at the time of the Venice Declaration, the Europeans had no leverage with the Palestinians, and only minor leverage with Israel," Tovias says. By leverage, he means influence stemming from economic assistance.

"The ones who had leverage with the Palestinians were the Saudis and the Russians," he says.

Today, Tovias says, "the Europeans have taken the place of the Saudis and Russians. My thesis is that Israel can make some capital of this."

According to EU figures, Europe has provided some $1.8 billion of aid to the Palestinians since 1993, by far the largest contribution in the world.

Although Tovias says he has not seen any willingness by Israel to let the EU get involved in political questions, "there might be a slow erosion in this regard."

"What Israel understands better now is that in one respect the political involvement of the EU can be useful to Israel, since the Union can apply pressure on the Palestinians. Whereas the US has a lot of leverage with Israel, the EU now has a lot of leverage with the Palestinians," he continues.

Tovias says that while blocking European involvement in peace talks has had the positive aspect of preventing pressure on Israel from the EU, "you also don't get pressure on the Palestinians either. When you realize that the Europeans are essentially financing the Palestinian Police, you realize they may have a lot of leverage with the other side, and begin to think that their involvement can be used for your own purposes."

Tovias: "What Israel understands better now is that in one respect the political involvement of the EU can be useful to Israel, since the Union can apply pressure on the Palestinians."

Still, the summits planned for May 4 in London seem a long way from shunting the Americans aside, and replacing US envoy Dennis Ross with Blair.

The dust has settled since Blair's visit on Sunday, and the four-way summit initially discussed is planned as separate meetings between Albright and Netanyahu, and Albright and Arafat, with Blair stepping in to say a cordial "hello."

Jacques Neriah, a former diplomatic advisor to late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, maintains that what happened this week with Blair is no indication at all that Israel has softened its stand toward the Europeans.

"I think it is all part of a gimmick to buy time," Neriah says. "Another conference, another meeting. More activity, but no action."

"Everyone realizes that nothing will move without the Americans, and no one will dare try to replace the Americans," he says.

Besides, adds Neriah, who heads the Israel Humanitarian Foundation which distributes two to three million dollars annually to various charitable causes, "although the Europeans may have leverage with the Palestinians, they have limited ability to coerce Israel into doing anything."

That may be true, argues Tovias, but together the US and the Europeans may make an effective team, with the US able to apply pressure on Israel, and the EU able to turn some screws on the Palestinians.

Moshe Raviv, the ambassador to Britain from 1993 to 1997, warns against placing too much emphasis on the site of the Albright-Arafat, Albright-Netanyahu meetings scheduled for May 4 in London. He says this should in no way be construed as a change in Israel's perception of a European role.

"This is not a turning point," Raviv says. "The meetings will only be significant if they produce results – unless this happens, it will just be another meeting. It does not in any way represent a change in Israeli attitudes toward Europe, but is just a matter of convenience."

Raviv says that the Palestinians, who see themselves as the weaker partner in negotiations, are always looking for third partners to assist them.

"But experience must have taught them that the best results are when we sit down face to face – as in Oslo. The major breakthroughs have been made directly between Israelis and Palestinians," Raviv says.

Yehuda Blum, the ambassador to the UN from 1978 to 1984, says that the US may be using the possibility of greater European involvement as a threat to dangle over Israel's head.

"They could be using the Europeans as a stick," Blum says, "saying to us, – if you don't get along with our proposals, there are others out there waiting to have a go – try your luck with them."

Blum says it is not clear from what transpired in Jerusalem and Gaza this week just how active the EU will be in the London talks.

"There were mixed signals," Blum says. "Blair said that the Americans are behind the meetings in London, and he is only the host.

"That means he is putting forth the facilities, Britain's good offices.

"I think that is more a gesture to the Americans, than to us. He does not want to get in any kind of confrontation with the US."

The Palestinians, Blum agrees, want to see increased EU involvement out of a belief that the Europeans would put more pressure on Israel than the Americans would. But, he said, nobody should delude themselves into believing that hosting a meeting is the same as active engagement in the process.

"[Cabinet secretary Dan] Naveh made clear that London is only a meeting place, and does not mean that the European committee is involved. I have the feeling that he was sent to clarify after Netanyahu's remarks at the press conference that the Europeans are not going to be involved like the Americans, and are not going to be the fourth leg to the chair. It really does not make a difference if they meet in London, Copenhagen or elsewhere. The site is not significant," Blum says.

Despite the success Blair had in Ireland, Blum doesn't think the British leader, whose six month turn as head of the 15-nation EU ends in June, is dying to get involved here.

"There are those in Europe who want to get involved, primarily the French and the Spanish. But I don't get the impression that Blair wants to get that actively involved, not because he is afraid of the conflict, but because of the Anglo-American friendship – he does not want to give the Americans the impression that he is acting as a competitor," Blum says.

"It seems to me what he is trying to do is balance between the Americans – who don't want too much European involvement – and other Europeans, like the French, who want to see a more active role."



British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Israel this week. He's not about to replace US envoy Dennis Ross as a mediator. (AP)

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Olmert looks west

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert plans to annex outlying communities. He has few defenders and some high-powered opponents. Larry Derfner reports

Like many of Mevasseret Zion's 20,000 residents, Yossi Sharvit, who has lived in this Jerusalem suburb for all of his 37 years, gets pretty emotional over Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert's plan to effectively annex his hometown.

"Olmert is trying to occupy us by force. Not with tanks, not with troops, but by force nevertheless," said Sharvit. "We will do everything in our power, within the boundaries of the law, to stop him."

Sharvit was speaking during a Wednesday night meeting at Mevasseret's town hall, where some 30 anti-annexation activists, backed by council head Eli Mouyal, decided to shut down the town's public institutions and services on Sunday in protest.

"This is a beautiful town, with lots of greenery, with a country atmosphere. Olmert wants to turn it into a crowded city, just like Jerusalem – to build and build and build some more. He wants Mevasseret and [other suburbs west of the capital like] Motza and Tsur Hadassah and Abu Ghosh and Telshe Stone, and then he'll keep going all the way to Lod," declared Sharvit.

In the view of Jerusalem city spokesman Haggai Elias, this kind of statement is simple "demagoguery." So are declarations about the suburban residents' fears that Olmert plans to crank up their property taxes to make up for all the taxes he doesn't collect from Jerusalem's haredim and Arabs. Equally false are charges that Olmert is looking for a convenient new place to dump the city's garbage, the spokesman maintained.

"The mayor has said he will not raise the property taxes in Mevasseret or any other suburb, and that he is not interested in using their land as a garbage dump," Elias said.

What Olmert *does* want, Elias said, is the authority to expand the capital westward – to build new housing, industry and infrastructure – without having to fight Mevasseret and the other suburbs that want to keep Jerusalem a safe distance away.

"Our industrial parks are full up. For more than a year we've been trying to decide on building a new industrial park in conjunction with Mevasseret Zion, but they keep objecting to every detail and nothing has moved," Elias said. "This way, instead of having a lot of bosses who argue with each other, there will one boss, and that will be Ehud Olmert, together with the Interior Ministry and the Planning and Building Committee."

This is exactly what the folks in Mevasseret and its environs are afraid of.

Elias insists their fears are groundless. "The new system will be good for the [suburban] residents," he said. Once planning authority devolves from the local authorities to Jerusalem, which would act as the "umbrella municipality" in the region, many town planners, engineers and clerks would become redundant, and their dismissal would save the suburban taxpayers millions of shekels.

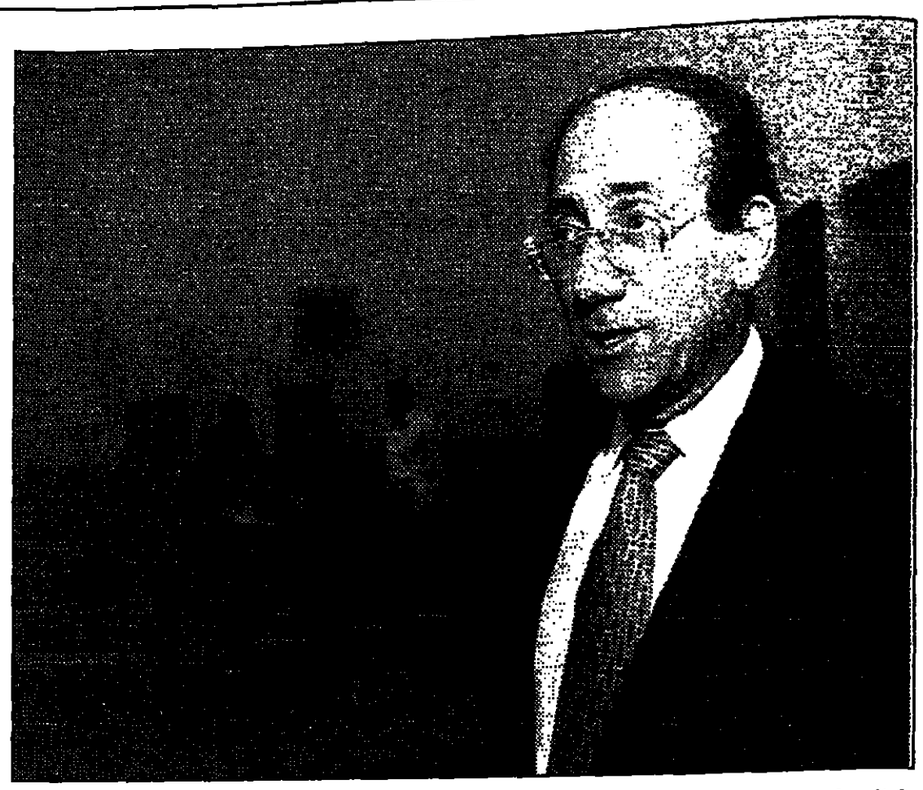
"Olmert has promised that all the savings will go to the local authorities, not to Jerusalem," the spokesman added.

THE PLAN TO ANNEX the capital's western suburbs was first proposed by the Interior Ministry in 1986, Elias said. Olmert recently raised the proposal anew and said he wanted the Knesset to pass it into law by Independence Day. Fierce local opposition, however, slowed down the plan.

While Prime Minister Netanyahu, Interior Minister Eli Suissa and Olmert discussed the plan on Tuesday, some 300 suburban residents protested outside the PM's Office. At one point some of them tried, unsuccessfully, to block the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway.

Among the Mevasseret residents active in the anti-annexation campaign are Channel 2 director-general Nahman Shai and former General Security Services head Carmi Gillon. Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, who also lives in Mevasseret, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who lives in Motza, reportedly oppose the idea as well.

Israel Kimche, a leading authority on Jerusalem planning, said that while it's too soon to judge a proposal that is not final, he doesn't like the way it's being imposed on the suburbs.



Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert: Trying to build new housing and industry – or cover the city's deficit? (Photos: Brian Hendler)

"I don't think that in the 20th century you can force people, many of whom left the city, to become part of it again," said Kimche, chief researcher for the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. "Regional coordination on such issues as roads and sewage is a good thing, but there are other ways to do it without taking away the local authorities' independence."

Former Labor Party minister Shimon Shetreet, who is running for mayor on the One Jerusalem ticket in the November election, agrees. "You cannot do such a thing unilaterally," he said. "It goes against the democratic spirit and the Israeli political tradition of taking the public's views into consideration – especially in a case like this, where you have many residents of Mevasseret Zion and Tsur Hadassah who moved out of Jerusalem."

Shetreet said the capital had no more right to annex its western suburbs than Tel Aviv had to annex Ramat Gan and its other adjacent cities. (Such a plan was "announced" by Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo as an April Fool's Day gag.)

Elias said there was no comparison between the two. Ramat Gan, Bat Yam, Herzliya and other Tel Aviv neighbors "are large cities unto themselves," he said, while Jerusalem's suburbs are relatively tiny. Tsur Hadassah and Motza, for instance, have only hundreds of residents each.

Deciding which suburbs should be independent and which should be part of the city was a fairly arbitrary matter, he continued. "Mevasseret Zion is no further away from Jerusalem than Pisgat Ze'ev, yet Pisgat Ze'ev is part of Jerusalem. And why should Mevasseret be independent but not Gilo, which has 45,000 residents.

"Mevasseret only became a local authority because of a decision by the Interior Ministry; why shouldn't the ministry have the right to change that decision?" Elias insisted.

Shetreet, however, contended that the whole idea is designed to "allow Olmert to cover the city's deficit, which has ballooned under his administration, by reaching into the pockets of residents in Mevasseret and Tsur Hadassah." He warned that local property taxes in these and other affected suburbs could "double or even triple" if the annexation goes through.

Olmert needs to find new sources of city income, Shetreet maintained, "because he bought the population sector which put him in power – the haredim – with billions of shekels." The money came in property tax reductions and deferments, and land allocations for religious institutions which pay no property tax, Shetreet said.

To this, Elias repeated that Olmert has pledged not to raise any suburb's taxes, and he noted that Mevasseret Zion's tax revenues were only a fraction of Jerusalem's, so there wasn't much money to covet in the first place.

The city's deficit has not grown during Olmert's regime, added Elias, who put Shetreet's charges down to "electioneering."

Yet a highly-respected planning expert (who didn't want his name published) said suburbanites west of Jerusalem had good reason to fear the annexation plan - not necessarily because it would lead to higher taxes, but because Jerusalem was an object lesson in how a city should not be run.

"The quality of life here deteriorates year by year. The streets are in terrible condition, the parks are not kept up. Jerusalem gets more crowded all the time; the green spaces are being eaten up by concrete. There are plans to build dozens of buildings in the city of up to 50 and 60 stories. Where is the transportation to support all this? The current plans for Jerusalem are going to prove a catastrophe for generations, and now the city is going to put its hands on even more land?" the expert asked.

No thank you, says Yossi Sharvit. "If I wanted to live in Jerusalem, I would have moved to Jerusalem," he said. "And if Olmert wants to build, let him build on Har Homa and leave us alone."



'Annexation of Mevasseret is political violence.' Demonstrators outside the Prime Minister's Office protest Olmert's plan.

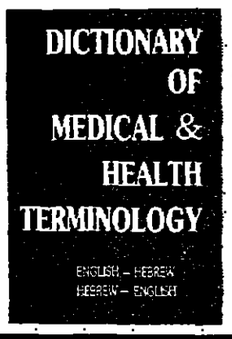
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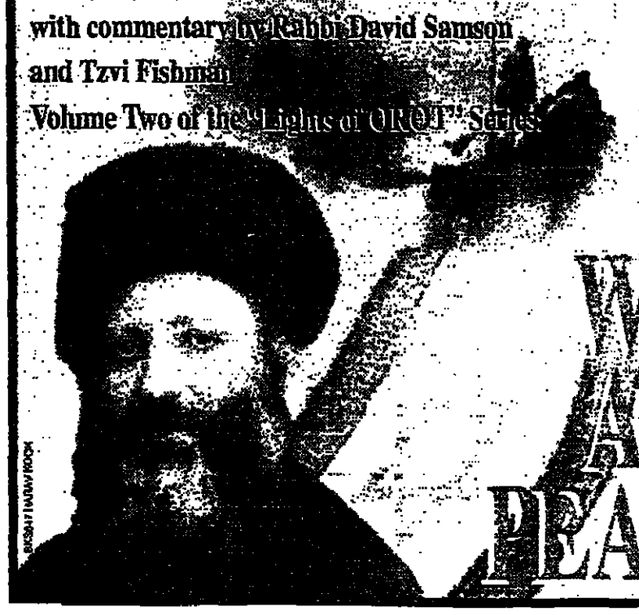
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Continued from Page 1

The official refused to discuss what consequences might follow continued disagreement over fulfilling the US's four-part agenda: progressing to final-status talks; ceasing provocative acts; resolving Palestinian demands for a larger Israeli redeployment, and improving the PA's level of security cooperation with Israel.

He would not comment, for example, on speculation that the US is weighing the possibility of removing itself as a mediator.

"If we're not successful in moving ahead, we'll have to look at what we can do," he acknowledged, adding that the US is hoping that the next 10 days yield dramatic changes in the year-long freeze.

He added that the US is encouraged by Arafat's crackdown on Hamas and wishes that Israel were more encouraging toward Arafat for the progress he has made in fighting terrorism.

"They're in a full-blown campaign against Hamas as an institution. That's very important," the official said. "It needs to be sustained... Arafat is doing the right thing. I can add – 'at last' – but he's doing the right thing."

Indyk is to remain in the region to link up with Vice President Al Gore, who is to fly to Israel late next week to participate in the 50th anniversary celebrations.

In Gaza, Arafat met last night with cabinet members to discuss the Ross visit. A senior PA official warned Israel against trying to stop the declaration of Palestinian statehood.

Also discussed were the visit of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the London meeting with Albright.

Arafat plans to fly to Germany today for a two-day visit, during which he will meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

PA Secretary-General Tayeb Abdul Rahim said neither peace nor stability would come to the region unless the Palestinians obtain statehood with Jerusalem as their capital. Addressing a graduation ceremony of security officers in Gaza, Abdul Rahim reiterated that statehood would be declared in another year.

He warned Israel against trying to stop the Palestinians.

"If they enter our lands, they will not leave alive," he said. "This is our decision. The Israeli side should understand that we are determined to bring about our stage next year on all our Palestinian lands according to the international laws."

Arafat aide Nabil Abu Rudeineh warned that if the London summits fail, the Arab countries would convene a summit and take a united position against Israel.

Jay Bushinsky, Steve Rodan and Mohammed Najib contributed to this report.

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Lost cause?

A British delegation, including actress Susannah York, came to Israel this week to push for Mordechai Vanunu's early release. Allison Kaplan Sommer examines whether the publicity will help or hinder his chances for parole



British actress Susannah York tries unsuccessfully to get into Shikma Prison where Vanunu is being held.

British actress Susannah York, who has campaigned relentlessly in recent years on behalf of nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu, does not harbor any illusions that her cause is popular with the Israeli public.

This became clear to her four years ago, when she was here to lobby for Vanunu's early release from prison, and a young man spat in her face on the street and called her "a traitor-lover."

The incident followed her appearance on the combative television program *Popolitica* during which, she recalls, "I was so continuously shouted at that I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

Yet, in the time that has elapsed between that visit and her current stay in Israel this week, lobbying on the eve of Vanunu's parole hearing, she says she perceives a softening in the feelings of Israelis towards Vanunu.

The former technician at the Dimona nuclear plant has served 12 years of his 18-year prison term for selling Israel's nuclear secrets to London's *Sunday Times* in 1986. Nearly all of it has been in solitary confinement.

This week, "people have praised me for daring to mention Vanunu's name and a young soldier even told me that he wished the Israeli public was more informed about the case," says York.

She was also pleased to find that hundreds of Israelis agreed to sign a petition calling for clemency for Vanunu, and several demonstrated for his early release on Wednesday in front of Shikma Prison when the parole hearing was taking place. (After sitting for nearly five hours, the parole board failed to reach a decision and put off further hearings until next month.)

"Four years ago none of this would have happened," she says.

York, active in the International Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, came here accompanied by the joint vice-chairmen of the Human Rights Committee of the British Parliament, Labor MP Jeremy Corbyn and Lord Avebury. They brought a petition signed by 700 international figures to Beit Hanassi, asking President Ezer Weizman to pardon Vanunu, and traveled to the prison where he is being held in an unsuccessful attempt to meet with him.

The intent of the visit was "to bring attention to his plight and, of course, to persuade the authorities [to consider his] release from prison," said York.

"The timing is excellent, what with Mordechai's upcoming parole review coinciding with the 50th anniversary celebrations, and the rather extraordinary circumstances that British Prime Minister Tony Blair came here this week as well. We wrote to Tony Blair asking him to speak to Netanyahu about Vanunu but we are unsure if he was able to do so." (During his visit, Blair said he had not raised the issue.)

York believes that all British, including Blair, bear "some sense of responsibility for his future and his plight, since the case involved the *Sunday Times*."

THE GROUP that came to Israel represents just a fraction of the international support for Vanunu; there are chapters of the free Vanunu campaign in several countries, and he has become a hero in anti-nuclear circles.

Ironically, it is precisely the elements that have made Vanunu a martyr abroad, that are likely to lead the parole board to deny his early release.

Vanunu regrets none of his actions, reiterating that position in a *Sunday Times* interview this week, in which he says he "would do it all over again."

Justice Ministry officials told the parole board on Wednesday that the defense establishment believes Vanunu still knows secrets that could damage Israel's security if revealed.

This, combined with the indication that he is still strongly committed to his cause – and would presumably, continue to make what he knows public – makes the chances of his parole appear slim.

Even Vanunu's own attorney, Avigdor Feldman, is quite pessimistic about his chances for parole. Feldman argues strenuously that Vanunu does not possess any information whose revelation could hurt state security. He admits, however that "it might help his case if he did regret his actions; but he does not – and he is not going to lie about it."

It certainly did not help Feldman's case that answers to the questions posed by the *Sunday Times* were smuggled out of Vanunu's prison cell. Vanunu could be punished by having prison privileges like visits and phone calls suspended and, at worst, a return to solitary confinement.

"Listen, the publicity can only have a positive effect. The state is so determined not to let him go, that no outside influence could possibly harm his case; it can only do good," Vanunu's attorney says.

"The publicity can only have a positive effect. The state is so determined not to let him go that no outside influence could possibly harm his case"

– lawyer Avigdor Feldman

Vanunu claims that he merely spoke to his brother, who, without his knowledge, delivered his statements to the British newspaper.

COULD ALL of this international publicity and political pressure be backfiring? Feldman doesn't think so.

"True, it hasn't done much so far, but I hope over time there will be a change."

York, however, believes that pressure by the international human rights community was instrumental in helping to improve Vanunu's prison conditions; specifically, the easing of his conditions in solitary confinement and current ability to mix with other prisoners, a change that occurred this year.

"I feel that the State of Israel acted with a great lack of humanity in converting the sentence of 18 years imprisonment to solitary confinement," York says. "Solitary is the cruelest form of psychological torture, and to face 12 years of it is dangerous for one's mental health."

Vanunu, York maintains, is a prisoner of conscience.

"Basically, he stands by his actions. he didn't want to be a hero, he didn't want to have to speak out or be in this position. He had to, but he didn't do it for any gain for himself; he did it for his country" she says.

"Listen, there is no disputing the fact that he broke state law and his vow of secrecy. But when he made the vow, he understood that the program was a civil program; only afterwards he found out it was for military objectives, and realized the amount of warheads we were talking about.

"It was not an immediate response, but a slow dawning of the fact that people had a right to know what was being done in their name. He couldn't stand up and say within Israel itself 'Do you know what the situation is? Do you know we would have more than 200 warheads?'

"It was a case of conscience. Mordechai knew that the moral imperative of letting people know was even greater than breaking state law."

Despite the fact that she has found herself at odds with the authorities and much of the public, York rejects the charge that she is "anti-Israel."

"All my visits here until now have been so political," she says. "I would love to come back someday as a tourist."

The importance of being Ernest

Who's behind the British movement to free Vanunu? Douglas Davis meets Jewish furniture manufacturer Ernest Rodker



Mordechai Vanunu (Eliahu Harati)

The British chapter of the International Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu mirrors its counterparts in dozens of countries around the world. Its activists are a small and disparate collection of politically charged clergymen, maverick politicians and celebrities in search of a cause, plus a sprinkling of doctrinaire socialists, radical environmentalists and anti-nuclear activists.

There is no membership; about 3,500 are on the mailing list. They come from a long tradition of British support for the lame and the halt, the underdog and the persecuted, and their individual motivation is as diverse as the causes they represent.

Some are driven by humanitarian concern for what they perceive to be a brave individual who is desperately seeking to avoid a nuclear holocaust; others use the campaign to gain a free ride for their own related causes; still others use it as a platform from which to vent their anti-Israel sentiments.

Whatever drives them, it is safe to assume that, Vanunu or no Vanunu, none of those who periodically demonstrate at the Israeli Embassy, sign petitions, stand in vigils or participate in delegations are planning to attend any of the functions in London to celebrate Israel's 50th anniversary.

For them, Israel is the unalloyed villain, while Vanunu is the recast Mandela, the reinvented Sharansky, a saintly and heroic idealist who took on the brutal apparatus of an oppressive regime armed only with the shield of principles and courage.

WELL, PERHAPS not Sharansky. Ernest Rodker, a furniture manufacturer and full-time voluntary coordinator of the British campaign to free Vanunu, says he felt passionately about the incarcerated Mandela, but he falls silent when Sharansky's name is raised.

Pressed, he loses his composure.

"Well," he says, sulkily, "you can't support everything."

Rodker is Jewish. He has, he says, made some furniture for "Jewish synagogues," but he notes, more in sorrow than in anger: "There are times when you must tread on people's toes."

Such as Saturday mornings, when the campaign holds a regular vigil near the Israeli Embassy and passing Israeli tourists stop to gape.

Rodker, who was drafted into the campaign by Vanunu's brother Meir in 1991, affects an attitude of hurt when he describes the reaction of the curious Israelis to the discovery that some members of his group are Jewish. The Israelis, he says, call them "Jew-haters."

But that is as far from the truth as suggestions that they are also Israel-haters, he insists. "I am a supporter of Middle East peace and a critic of Israel," he declares.

So how does a man who pours huge quantities of his time, energies, resources and passion into manning the Free Vanunu office in London, fill his day?

He sends out pamphlets and information sheets, writes letters to parliamentarians seeking political support, letters to others seeking financial support, and helps organize Free Vanunu groups around the country.

And what sort of activities does he encourage them to organize?

He encourages them, he says, to raise money, distribute his information, run religious ceremonies to mark Vanunu's conversion to Christianity, write to Vanunu, write to the Israeli Embassy, write to members of parliament, organize vigils and arrange boycotts of Israeli goods...

What have boycotts of Israeli goods to do with Vanunu?

"No, no," Rodker corrects himself. "I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have said we encourage pickets against Israeli goods."

Then recovering, he adds the caveat: "Of course, we can't control what the groups do."

So does he condone action against Israel's commercial interests? A sulky silence. Does he condemn it? More silence.

Unlike Mandela and Sharansky, who did indeed wage moral campaigns against brutal tyrannies – in the near certainty that they would ultimately have to pay a terrible price – there is little about the Vanunu affair that seems to bear close moral scrutiny.

Sacked from his job at the Dimona nuclear facility, Vanunu left his country – and his family and his religion – betrayed nuclear secrets, and then insisted that he had acted in everyone's best interests.

Yet Vanunu support groups now exist in dozens of countries, – from the United States and Russia through Nigeria, India, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand.

WHAT MAKES the British group, of all the many groups scattered throughout the world, particularly active and prominent?

Firstly, London's *Sunday Times*, which published Vanunu's 1986 revelations that ultimately led to his abduction to Israel, clearly feels a residual responsibility.

The paper had no knowledge of Vanunu's supposedly chance meeting with "Cindy" in Leicester Square or his decision to accept her invitation to a weekend of rest-and-recreation at her flat in Rome, but it regularly finds reasons to resurrect the story of his plight.

Secondly, the British campaign has attracted a small group of high-profile personalities whose activities naturally attract media attention – actresses Susannah York and Julie Christie, playwright Harold Pinter and former priest Bruce Kent, became a cause celebre when he exchanged the church for a wife and a life of devotion to nuclear disarmament.

Less influential are the clutch of political figures who have attached themselves to the cause. They tend to occupy positions on the fringes of mainstream politics and, while some are well known, they are famous for being mavericks and are taken seriously only on the outer limits of the political margins.

Other factors that contribute to the British involvement are the geographic proximity of Israel, the coterie (and affluence) of its high-profile supporters – and, perhaps, the sheer frisson of excitement at the prospect of "confronting Israel" and "saving Mordechai."

There can be no doubt about Rodker's dedication, persistence and obsessiveness.

"I really feel it and live it and put everything into it," he says, anxious to dispel any doubts about his commitment to the cause.

But if Vanunu is pinning his hopes for an early release on the efforts of his British campaign coordinator, he may well be disappointed: Rodker is not about to open any cell doors anywhere.

After just an hour of conversation, there is an unmistakable sense that if anyone is in need of liberation, it is Rodker himself.

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A mysterious death?

The official statement said she died in Santa Barbara, Calif. But the coroner's office received no death certificate for Linda McCartney, raising questions about where she died and how.

–SANTA BARBARA, Calif. – The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department has begun an investigation into conflicting accounts about where Linda McCartney, the wife of former Beatle Paul McCartney, died.

Sgt. Jim Peterson, a spokesman for the sheriff's office, said Santa Barbara officials opened their inquiry after the coroner's office received no death certificate for McCartney, who, according to her family, died last Friday of breast cancer, at the age of 56.

Nor was there authorization from the county for her remains to be cremated, as is required, he said.

"We don't know that she died," Peterson said Wednesday. "We don't know where she died, and we don't know when she died."

Peterson said it was premature to speculate on whether there may have been anything suspicious about the death, saying the department's investigation might simply reveal a paperwork snafu.

Officials in Tucson, Ariz., said they could not confirm reports suggesting that Linda McCartney may have died there at a family estate.

The McCartney family had issued statements saying that Linda McCartney died in Santa Barbara last Friday and was subsequently cremated. The location of her death was reported in obituaries published around the world.

Paul McCartney's spokesman, Geoff Baker, was quick to dismiss the suggestion that anyone may have assisted Linda McCartney's death after a years-long battle with cancer.

"Any suggestion that her death was assisted is complete and absolute rubbish, total nonsense," Baker said.

A statement from McCartney himself in England also discounted that suggestion, saying his wife's doctor could confirm that she died naturally.

Dr. Larry Norton, Linda McCartney's oncologist, has said that she died of natural causes.

"She died of natural causes of metastic breast cancer," said a statement issued by Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, where Norton practices.

But Paul McCartney's statement appeared to create more confusion about the question of where the former photographer had died.

"When Linda died last Friday with her family around her, it was in a place that was private to her and her family," it said.

According to Baker, Santa Barbara was named as the place of death for the sake of the family.

"In an effort to allow the family time to get back to England in peace and in private it was stated that she had died in Santa Barbara," Baker said.

Linda McCartney attended the University of Arizona in the mid-1960s. The McCartneys bought a 600-dunam ranch east of Tucson, near Redington Pass, in 1979, and were known to use it with some frequency as a low-profile getaway.

People magazine reported on its Internet Web site Wednesday that Linda McCartney had died at the Tucson ranch.

Officials in Pima County in Arizona refused to help unravel the mystery, saying that state confidentiality laws prevented them from saying whether a death certificate for Linda McCartney had been filed in the county.

"We can't disclose that," David Dingeldine, chief of the Pima County Attorney's Office civil division. "That's final until somebody figures out there's some sort of hanky-panky going on in Pima County and presents some kind of evidence to that effect."

Linda McCartney reportedly died of breast cancer that had spread to her liver. A woman in the final stage of that disease is typically very lethargic and fatigued, possibly confused or in a coma-like state, said Dr. Linnea Chap, an oncologist at UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center.

Such deep lethargy, brought on by the liver's inability to process natural toxins, runs counter to accounts of McCartney's final days.

She reportedly went horseback riding two days before she died.

Before her death, Linda McCartney had spent two weeks with her husband at the home of a friend in the wooded enclave of Hope Ranch overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the Santa Barbara *News-Press* reported Tuesday.

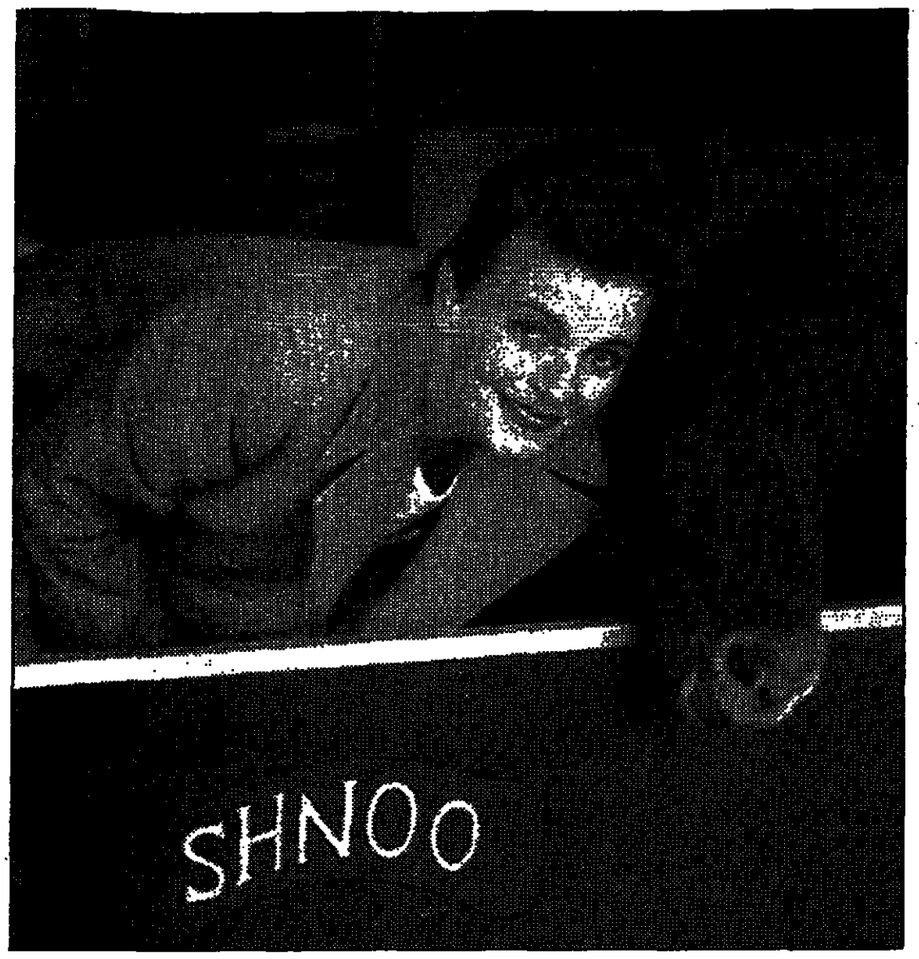
"The way it has been portrayed probably is a bit over-optimistic given how she probably felt a few days before her death," said Chap, who emphasized that she was not familiar with the details of McCartney's medical condition.

"We don't know how well she felt when she went horseback riding," Chap said. "In all likelihood she was feeling quite weak and may have simply wanted to go ride one last time."

For the past three decades, Linda McCartney sought refuge in Santa Barbara from England's foggy cold, keeping up old friendships, walking along the beach and horseback riding with her husband and their four children, one from a previous marriage.

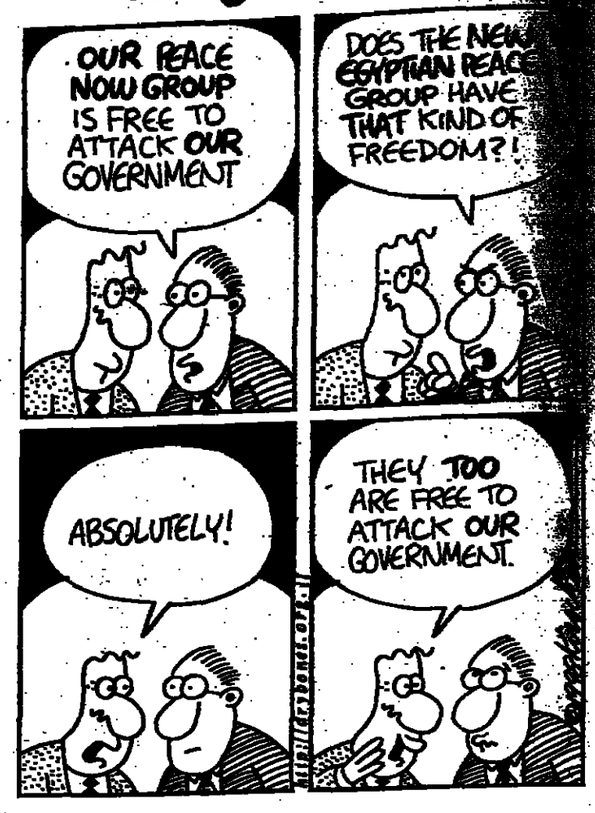
On Tuesday, hundreds of friends gathered there to pay tribute to her. "The people of Santa Barbara need to gather together and pay respects to someone we really felt was part of our family," said Beatles historian Martin Lewis.

The daughter of an entertainment lawyer, Linda Eastman was already acclaimed for her moody, gritty photographs when she married Paul McCartney in London in 1969. (Los Angeles Times, AP)



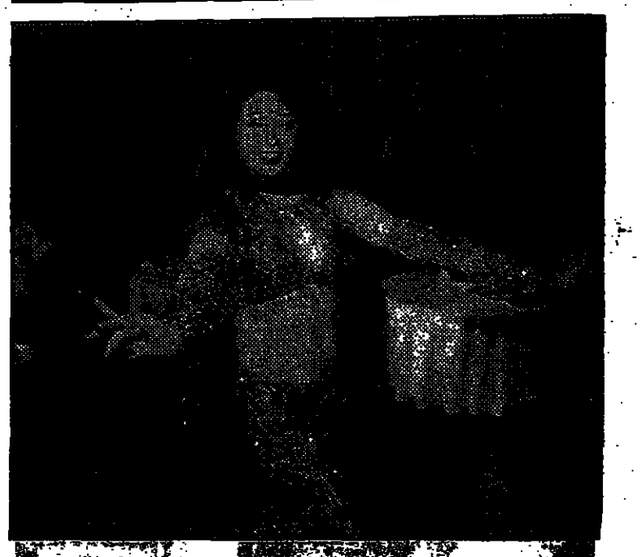
One of the last pictures taken of Linda McCartney: 'We don't know how well she felt when she went horseback riding [two days before she died],' Dr. Linnea Chap, a UCLA oncologist said. 'In all likelihood she was feeling quite weak and may have simply wanted to go ride one last time.' (AP)

Dry Bones



GRAPEVINE

By GREER FAY CASHMAN



A Mimouna fete: Yael Gavish belly dancing at a get-together that included Shimon Shetreet and Ahmed Tibi.

Chances are good that during US Vice-President Al Gore's lightning visit here on Independence Day he will pay tribute to American Colonel Mickey Marcus, who was accidentally killed on the outskirts of Jerusalem in 1948 and subsequently buried at West Point. The Mickey Marcus memorial at Kiryat Telshe Stone in the Jerusalem corridor is just outside the home of Rabbi **Eliot Sherman**, director of the nearby American Promenade in Israel project.

Sherman hopes to be able to steer Gore to the promenade site but even if he fails, he has the consolation of knowing that **Newt Gingrich**, US speaker of the house, will definitely visit the promenade when he comes here in May. Gingrich is one of the honorary members of the Joint Commission on the American Promenade in Israel. Upon completion, the promenade will consist of 50 tall marble monuments bearing the flags and official seals of the 50 states, ringed around the US-Israel Friendship Botanical Garden in Kiryat Telshe Stone.

WHEN Defense Minister **Yitzhak Mordechai** hosted US Secretary of Defense **William Cohen** at a gala dinner in the Knesset's Chagall Hall, it looked as if anyone who has ever been anybody in the top brass of the defense and security establishment was there. From **Ephriam Halevy**, the new head of the Mossad, to all the former living defense ministers (except President **Ezer Weizman**, who breakfasted with Cohen and Mordechai at the latter's home). But **Shimon Peres**, **Ariel Sharon** and **Moshe Arens** were on hand, as were former chiefs of staff such as Agriculture Minister **Rafael Eitan**.

Cohen's tall, beautiful wife, **Janet**, stood out in her long, elegant dress because of her height, while Mordechai's wife, **Kochava "Kochi,"** in an advanced stage of pregnancy, was standing out for other reasons.

Dudu Fisher, who had returned from abroad earlier in the day, sang "The Prayer" from *Les Miserables* at Janet Cohen's request. Since she is also a fan of **Chaim Topol's**, *Mordechai* had invited him to the dinner. But Topol declined Fisher's invitation to sing "If I Were a Rich Man" and instead sang *a cappella* "Buddy Can You Spare a Dime?" Called back on stage by Mordechai, Fisher sang a medley of *Fiddler on the Roof* songs.

Tsomet MK **Pini Badash** was the only male guest not wearing a suit at the event. The sandal-clad legislator even laughed at Eitan for putting on a jacket and a tie which was decorated with tiny parachutes. The entire general staff was there, spruced up in dress uniforms, but they were no match for the American officers, whose dress uniforms included gold braid and chests full of medals.

Cohen drew applause when he recited the blessing over the bread in Hebrew. He jokingly called Mordechai the "Minister of Offense," and Mordechai retaliated by calling Cohen by his Hebrew name, Ze'ev.

FORMER prime minister **Shimon Peres** will be on the hop in Jerusalem tomorrow night. In addition to being included in a dual capacity in the Israel Bonds tribute to former prime ministers and finance ministers, he will also participate in the re-signing ceremony of the Declaration of Independence, at the King David Hotel. It will be signed by some 200 public figures including ministers, MKs, judges, mayors and captains of industry. The event, under the sponsorship of the New Israel Fund, is scheduled to start at the same time as the Bonds tribute across town.

AT LAST YEAR'S inauguration of the Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization Women of Distinction awards, the special award was given to **Reuma Weizman**. This year, it is going to her older sister, **Ruth Dayan**, founder of Maskit and the Eshet Hayil project. Other recipients at the gala Knesset ceremony will include broadcaster, producer and actress **Rivka Michaeli** in the field of media; Weizmann Institute of Science professor **Hadassa Degani** in the field of medical research; and **Puina Herzog**, a member of the World Health Organization Executive and an executive member of numerous other boards in the field of public service.

DARNA, the authentic Moroccan restaurant in Jerusalem, is a popular drop-in spot for Mimouna festivities. Moroccan-born **Shimon Shetreet**, who is running in the capital's mayoral elections, was in his natural habitat as he chatted with Darna's co-owner **Ilan Siboni** while they watched belly dancer **Yael Gavish**. Also wearing a broad smile was **Ahmed Tibi**, the adviser to Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat.

CULTURE

Continued from Page 16

"It's good that we are beginning to give more money to Mizrahim," Navon said: "But not at the cost of lowering subsidies to Western culture. Without operas and concerts, Israel won't be Israel. We will cut ourselves off from the Western world. Israel without opera won't be part of the democratic world."

For Navon, this credo is absolute and not open to question. When asked to explain the relationship between opera and democracy, or why Israel must necessarily be part of the West, he replied with obvious impatience: "Is it a good thing that rain falls? I can't explain why. We must belong to the Western world."

Aloni was much more confrontational in her response to Levy's announcement. She rejected the distinction between Mizrahi and Western culture altogether.

"Yigal Mosinsohn wrote the script for the musical, *Kazablan*," she said. "Giora Godick produced it. Yehoram Gaon starred in it. It was about the Moroccan immigration. Was the play Western? Was it Moroccan? No, it was Israeli."

She recited a long list of local productions, writers, actors and authors and rejected the ethnic label for all of them.

Then she added, almost as an aside: "First of all there is such a thing as a universal culture and no one can deny that. The Mizrahi activists claim that it is Western culture. But it is universal culture and it nurtures the entire world. It is based on Greco-Roman tradition and includes Judaism and Christianity."

She also warned that linking state subsidies to the number of people belonging to each ethnic group would dilute the quality of Israeli culture.

"Professional committees allocate funding to the institutions and groups on the basis of criteria – professional quality, the length of time they have been operating and, lastly, the size of their audience," she said.

"And that's the point. The size of the audience is the least important criteria because art is not a matter of ratings. If it were, all the money would go to Dudu Topaz."

IN THE same way that Aloni rejects ethnic distinctions among artists and artistic productions, so does she reject the classification of the cultural institutions receiving state funding as Mizrahi or Western.

At the same time, she says there are no more Mizrahi candidates worthy of state funding.

"There is no tradition of Moroccan ballet or Moroccan theater," she said. "They have belly dancers, singers and orchestras."

There are additional sources of government funding outside the Culture Authority and these are primarily earmarked for Mizrahim, she added.

They include NIS 20m. for cultural projects in the development towns and poor big city neighborhoods, NIS 12m. for local neighborhood theater, a special fund for sending school children to museums and Omanut La'am, which brings big-city cultural productions to the development towns.

Despite all this, she said, "there is a rapacious community of artists, including cinema people who, in order to get money, raise the ethnic banner, and others who gather around them all the embittered Moroccans. The really talented ones don't complain about discrimination."

According to Aloni, Yitzhak Levy is easy prey for these people.

"The tragedy is that Levy doesn't know anything about the theater. He's never attended a play. So the *hevre* come to him. They're Moroccan. He's Moroccan.

"They feed him this nonsense. He hasn't studied the matter properly. *So he launches a trial balloon.* He's all the more open to doing so because he has his own reasons for interfering with the contents of cultural institutions."

THAT IS not the way Chetrit, Goren and Bar see it. They warmly welcomed Levy's announcement, but added that it was the fruit of many years of fermentation within the Mizrahi community.

"*It will be a huge step forward,* if Levy actually does what he says he's going to do," said Goren. "But it's not him. He's a politician. He is aware that the time for such a move is ripe, that it is even an 'in' thing to do."

But Chetrit does not plan to rely on this. By establishing New Israel, he hopes to claim for his community what he believes is their rightful share.

"We have established a party so that we won't have to ask others to give us any longer," he said. "Instead, we will be the ones in charge of the budget. When you have to ask someone else to give you [money], that means you are in the weak position. We are not weak."

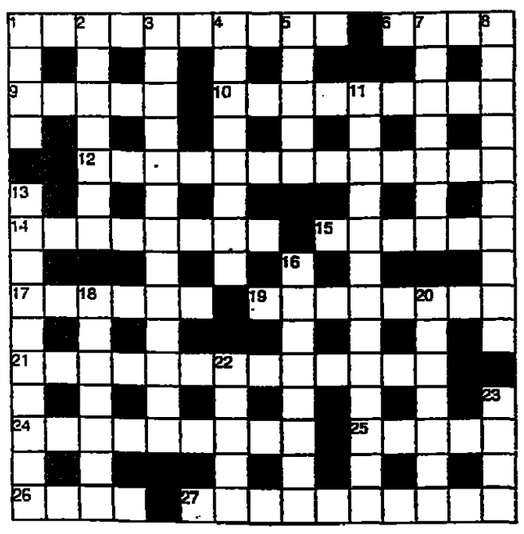
CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Man on motorway has scope for part of the planet (10)
6 Come up against an objection (4)
9 May get on as a rule (5)
10 A light covering (9)
12 It's what a ledger records presumably (6,2,5)
14 And not the navy line in London (8)
15 It's nonsense to dispose of his book, nothing less (6)
17 Cretan collected a heavenly drink (6)
19 More rugged rig Grace erected! (8)
21 No lack of room for astronauts (6,2,5)
24 Circular wriggler? (9)
25 Amount to pay for a piano? (5)
26 Daughter ran off with stitch (4)
27 Dot has been abducted, I agree with you (5,5)

DOWN

1 Horse is only partly shackled (4)
2 After half-time, I have the right fur (7)
3 Dedicated to celibacy? (6-7)
4 Official stamp on building record (8)
5 Lover gets no addition to capital (5)
7 Cupholder has a party about five—it's a boastful show! (7)
8 Do not worry at that place repeatedly (5,5)
11 Jack to obtain, after resting, an easy victim (7,6)
13 Unimaginative one in Paris drew breath (10)
16 An inexperienced fellow starting university? (8)
18 Peg one who threatens to win at chess so it is said (7)
20 Cold bag that might be drifting in the sea (7)
22 Moulding rings about short book (5)
23 Silent god (4)



SOLUTIONS

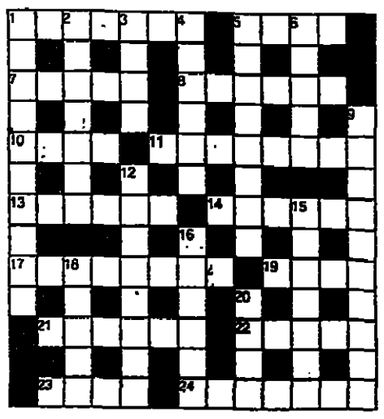


Yesterday's Quick Solution

ACROSS: 1 Knit, 4 Picking, 8 Swanking, 9 Lob, 11 Rhymed, 13 Mascot, 14 Dorie, 15 Nude, 17 Step, 18 Abrim, 20 Hobart, 21 Couple, 24 Oft, 25 Fallible, 26 Nodular, 27 Hurt.

DOWN: 2 Newsy, 3 Tinned, 4 Pail, 5 Cognac, 6 Illicit, 7 Gobstopper, 10 French horn, 12 Doubt, 15 Mimic, 16 Debated, 18 Artful, 19 Modish, 22 Paler, 23 Blur.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 West African country (7)
5 Relax (4)
7 Peninsula near Swansea (5)
8 Caramel (6)
10 Love-god (4)
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13 Touchy (6)
14 Scribble (6)
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19 Podium (4)
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24 From Lhasa (7)

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2 IOW town (7)
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4 Tiny (6)
5 Effectiveness (8)
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OLD YISHUV COURT MUSEUM. Life in the Jewish community in the Old city, mid-19th century - World War II. 6 Or Hahaim, Jewish Quarter, Old City. Sun.-Thur. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

ART GUIDE

TEL AVIV

TEL AVIV MUSEUM OF ART. Dani Karavan, Homage to Walter Benjamin. Yehezkel Streichman, Great Moments, 150 works.Surrealism, Prints from the Charles and Evelyn Kramer Collection. Contemporary Greek Art: Three Generations.HELEN RUBINSTEIN PAVILION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART.. Hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tue. 10a.m.-10 p.m. Fri., 10 a.m.-2, p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. **Meyerhoff Art Education Center,** Tel. 6919155-8.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

GENERAL ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY PHARMACIES

Friday 24
Jerusalem: Kupat Holim Clalit, Straus A, 3 Avigdori, 670-6660; Balsam, Salah e-Din, 627-2315; Shuafat, Shuafat Road, 581-0108; Dar Aldawa, Herod's Gate, 628-2058.
Tel Aviv: Bloch, 32 Bloch, 522-6425; Ariozorov, 76 Ariozorov, 523-0746.
Ra'anana-Kfar Sava: Superpharm, 3 Oshitshinski, Kfar Sava, 765-8889.
Netanya: Hanasi, 36 Weizman, 882-3639.
Haifa: Derech Hayam, 209 Derech Hayam, 837-1472.
Krayot area: Menahem Center, 29 Yerushalaim, Kiryat Yam A, 875-9441.
Herzliya: New Pharm, Beit Merkazim, 6 Maskit (cnr. Sderot Hagalim), Herzliya Pituah, 955-8472, 955-8407. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Upper Nazareth: New Pharm, Lev Ha'ir Mall, 657-0468. Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 25
Jerusalem: (day) Superpharm, 5 Borla, 679-1951; Shoresh Pharm, 42 Agrippus, 624-6484.; (day and evening) Balsam, Salah e-Din, 627-2315; Shuafat, Shuafat Road, 581-0108; Dar Aldawa, Herod's Gate, 628-2058.**Tel Aviv:** (day and evening) Bas, 66 Frishman, 523-7326; Brut, 28 King George, 528-3731. Till midnight: Superpharm Ramat Aviv, 40 Einstein, Ramat Aviv, 641-3730; Superpharm London Minstore, 4 Shaul Hamelech, 696-0106.
Ra'anana-Kfar Sava: (day) New Pharm, 114 Ahuza, Ra'anana, 741-0211; (evening) Golan Center, 198 Ahuza, Ra'anana, 774-5762.
Netanya: Hasharon, Mall, Herzl St., 861-7766.
Haifa: Hanasi, 33 Hanasi, 833-3312
Krayot area: Superpharm, Hakuyon, 44 Hapalmah, Kiryat Bialik, 877-9220.
Herzliya: New Pharm, Beit Merkazim, 6 Maskit (cnr. Sderot Hagalim), Herzliya Pituah, 955-8472, 955-8407. Open 10 a.m. to midnight.
Upper Nazareth: New Pharm, Lev Ha'ir Mall, 657-0468. Open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

DUTY HOSPITALS
Friday, April 24
Jerusalem: Hadassah Ein Kerem (orthopedics, surgery obstetrics, opthalmology, ENT); Shaare Zedek (internal, pediatrics).
Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatric Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (internal, surgery).
Netanya: Laniado.

Saturday, April 25
Jerusalem: Hadassah Ein Kerem (internal, orthopedics, surgery, ENT); Bikur Holim (obstetrics, pediatrics); Shaare Zedek (ophthalmology).
Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatric Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (internal, surgery).
Netanya: Laniado.

POLICE 100

FIRE 102

In emergencies dial 102. Otherwise, dial number of your local station as given in the front of the phone directory.

FIRST AID 101

Magen David Adom
In emergencies dial 101 in most parts of the country. In addition:

Ashdod	* 8551333	Kfar Sava	* 9902222
Ashkelon	6551332	Nahariya	* 9912333
Beersheba	* 6274767	Netanya	* 9604444
Bet Shemesh	6522133	P. Tikva	* 9311111
Dan Region	* 5793333	Rehovot	* 9451333
Eilat	6332444	Rishon	* 9642333
Haifa	* 8512233	Safed	6920333
Jerusalem	* 5623133	Tel Aviv	* 5460111
Karmiel	* 9986444	Tiberias	* 6752444

* Mobile Intensive Care Unit (MICU) service in the area, around the clock.

Help line for English-speakers – Confidential hot-line counseling and referrals for all ages, all problems. MiLev Center for Crisis Counseling. (02) 654-1111, 1-800-654-111.

Medical help for tourists (in English) 177-022-9110.

The National Poison Control Center at Rambam Hospital, phone 04-852-9205 for emergency calls 24 hours a day, for information in case of poisoning.

Eran – Emotional First Aid – 1201, also Jerusalem 561-0303, Tel Aviv 546-1111 (children/youth 546-0739), Rishon Lezion 956-6661/2, Haifa 867-2222, Beersheba 649-4333, Netanya 862-5110, Karmiel 988-8770, Kfar Sava 767-4555, Hadera 634-6789.

Rape Crisis Center (24 hours), Tel Aviv 523-4819, 544-9191 (men), Jerusalem 625-5558, Haifa 853-0533, Eilat 633-1977.

Crisis Center for Religious Women 02-655-5744/5. 24-hour service, confidentiality guaranteed.

Emergency line for women in distress Sunday-Thursday 24 hrs. a day; Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 09-950-5720.

Wizo hotlines for battered women 02-651-4111, 03-546-1133, 07-637-6310, 08-855-0506.

Kupat Holim Information Center 177-022-1906. Sunday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hadassah/Jerusalem Municipal Health Center for Adolescents, 6 Chile St., Kiryat Hayovel, Jlm. Advice by phone 02-643-3882.

Hadassah Medical Organization – Israel Cancer Association telephone support service 02-624-7676.

Flight arrivals – for information in English 03-972-3344.

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HOUSEKEEPER WITH REFERENCES and experience needed twice a week. Tel. 04-831-2771[792137]

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VEHICLES
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1996 BMW 525I, 68,000 km., metallic silver, like new. Tel. 09-954-1707. [792204]

I'M BUYING SELLING trading tax free and unrestricted cars, tourist immigrants diplomats , anyone who wants a good deal. Shipping 2 ways. Free Colin, Tel. 09-742-9517, 052-423-327. [791972]

No World Cup ticket? Try a Swiss phone

GENEVA (Reuters) – Soccer fans in the tranquil Swiss city of Geneva were profiting yesterday from yet another advantage of expatriate life here – easily obtainable World Cup tickets from the world's busiest reservation hotline.

Thanks to apparent Swiss disinterest in the event, expatriates contacted by Reuters said they had repeatedly got through to the Paris hotline swamped by some 20 million callers from around Europe.

"With 95 tickets amongst the five of us, we've given up trying. We've got all the tickets we need really," said one Scottish expatriate in this international city.

Another expatriate said his friends were ringing him from London offering to buy his tickets at three times the price.

He said it took him about half an hour to buy 16 tickets – the maximum allowed – and calculated that it could take over a week to sell the remaining 95,000 tickets at this rate.

Another fan reported getting through to the number, 33-1-4987 5354, twice from Geneva yesterday despite the overload on the second day of sales for the remaining first and second-round tickets.

British telecommunications expert Howard Williams was quoted as saying the chances of getting a ticket were one in two million as some 15 million calls were made from within France and five million from abroad between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

There is less pressure on phone lines in Switzerland since the country is not in the World Cup – a strange twist given the problems faced by those countries most keen on the tickets.

British Telecom, for instance, has limited the number of calls that get through to France to prevent lines from crashing.

So the only way round the chaos is to travel to a country where demand for international lines will be low – Switzerland or Liechtenstein, for example – and telephone from there, or get friends in other foreign countries to ring up.

A spokesman for Swisscom, the state-owned Swiss telecoms company, could not say how many people were ringing the Paris hotline from Switzerland, but estimated that it would be low.

"The reason our lines are not loaded is that Swiss people cannot buy these tickets because we are not in the European Economic Area," said the spokesman, Jacques Bettex.

One of the soccer fans with tickets said: "We had to give French addresses, but the operator didn't seem bothered." Bettex declined to say how many calls a second the Swiss lines to France could cope with.

"Our (line) capacity to France cannot be disclosed because it is secret. It is a strategic information for us," he said.

SPORTS
in brief

Brazil's World Cup odds cut to 11/4

LONDON (Reuters) – Brazil's odds were cut yesterday from 3/1 to 11/4 favorites to win the World Cup.

France, hosts for the finals starting on June 10, Germany and Italy are offered at 7/1, with England and the Netherlands at 8/1 and Argentina 12/1, bookmakers William Hill said.

Defending champions Brazil also have the favorite to be the tournament's top scorer, Ronaldo at 5/1.

England striker Alan Shearer has been backed from 8/1 to 7/1 to head the scoring list after hitting two goals in his country's 3-0 warm-up win against Portugal at Wembley on Wednesday.

Australia announce Ashes tour for 1998-99

MELBOURNE (Reuters) – England will travel to Australia for a five-Test Ashes series in 1998-99, the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) announced yesterday.

Breaking with tradition, the Tests will be played in a block before the start of a limited-overs tournament including reigning one-day world champions Sri Lanka.

"Whenever the Australian team has toured overseas in recent years, we have sought to separate Test and one-day cricket to enable concentration on one version of the game and this opportunity must also be available to countries that visit Australia's shores," ACB chief executive officer Malcolm Speed said.

The English will arrive in Australia on October 25 and will play their first Test in Brisbane starting on November 20.

They will also play Tests in Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne before the final match in Sydney.

SA rugby coach Kitch Christie dies at 58

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) – Kitch Christie, who coached South Africa to the World Cup, died late on Wednesday night in a Pretoria hospital after a lengthy battle with cancer.

He was 58.

Christie, the country's most successful coach, guided the Springboks to World Cup victory in 1995.

He also led the Springboks to a South African record of 14 successive Test victories before being replaced as national coach by Andre Markgraaff. He is survived by his wife Judy and son Clayton.

French hotel prices to soar during World Cup

PARIS (Reuters) – Hotel prices in French cities hosting the World Cup soccer championships will soar by an average 41 percent during the final matches in June and July, a French consumer magazine said yesterday.

The biggest jump – 58% – will be in hotels near the Stade de France, the main stadium built in a depressed suburb northeast of Paris, and in Montpellier, according to a survey by the magazine Que Choisir.

The lowest price hikes – 30% – will be around Lille near the Belgian border and in Toulouse in southwestern France, it added. Prices in big cities such as Paris, Lyon and Bordeaux will go up by about one-third.

"During its inquiry, Que Choisir caught a few hotels that really exaggerated," it said in a statement. "Some places boosted their rates by 209%, 147%, 120%, 77%..." The magazine of the Federal Consumers Union said it checked out 150 hotels, ranging from bargain lodgings to four star establishments.

The average price for a double room without breakfast, normally 387 francs ($64.37) a night, should rise to 547 francs ($90.99), Que Choisir said.

French women indifferent to World Cup – poll

PARIS (Reuters) – Most French women are not interested in the upcoming World Cup finals, according to an opinion poll published yesterday.

The Ipsos poll commissioned by the Galeries Lafayette department stores said 70 percent of French women were indifferent to the tournament and only 21 percent were looking forward to it.

But 80 percent said they would be disappointed to see France go out early in the tournament.

Pessah fair a success thanks to people's generosity

Thank you one and all.

Thank you for the wonderful response to our Pessah Handicrafts Fair that raised over NIS 40,000 for our three funds.

Thank you Bible Lands Museum for providing the hall. Thank you stall-holders and entertainers. And a special thank you to our readers and friends from Jerusalem and out of town, who made this year's fair such a joyous happening.

And a final thank you to Ophir Tours and Ziontours for each providing a free round-trip airline ticket to London as door prizes.

The one thing that we were not responsible for let us down. When we planned the fair back in December, rain and gales were uppermost in our mind. Little did we think that a heat wave would be the problem.

We're already thinking about next year's Pessah fair. Over the past years, we have alternated between the capital and the coast. So it looks as though in 1999, it will be the Sharon's turn.

Don't forget all three funds need your year-round support.

Send your checks today to: *The Jerusalem Post* Funds, P.O. Box 81, Jerusalem 91000.

Donors living in the United States wishing to receive tax benefits, can send their donations to: Friends of *The Jerusalem Post* Funds, 270 Lafayette St., Suite 505, New York, NY 10012. Please designate in your letter to which fund you wish to donate.

FUNDS

FORSAKE ME NOT

NIS 13,500 Proceeds of the Pessah Handicrafts Fair.
NIS 1,000 In memory of Yehuda Prihar - Shula and family, Zahala.
NIS 600 Ellen and Helmut Sport, Schwelm, Germany.
NIS 250 (Cdn$109) Frieda Feldman, Quebec, Canada.
NIS 200 Renate Strauss, Tel Aviv. In memory of our beloved father, Benjamin on his yahrzeit - R. R., Haifa.
NIS 150 In the names of my beloved grandchildren, Ronen, Noam, Daniel, Rebecca and Matthew - Sonia Jacobson, Tel Aviv.
NIS 120 Anon., Haifa.
NIS 100 The Sunday Bridge "girls," Tel Aviv.
NIS 50 Gila Ansell Brauner, J'lm.
NIS 36 In memory of Doris Moss - Rittie Katz, J'lm.
$1,000 In honor of the birthday of Debbie Tabacinic of Paris, France - Rohr family, Miami, FL.
$200 Ida and Roberto Neter, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
$100 In memory of Sgt. Nickolai Rappaport - Gilbert Shmilder, Rancho Mirage, CA.
$83.58 From the children in Mrs. Glazer's second-grade class, at the Melvin Gelman Religious School, Washington, DC.
$58.14 From the children in Mrs. Epstein's second grade class, at Melvin Gelman Religious School, Washington, DC.

New Progress	Donations Totals
NIS 15,841.24	NIS 105,908.11
$1,556.72	$28,834.97

(other currencies converted to shekels)

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NIS 13,500 Proceeds of the Pessah Handicrafts Fair.
NIS 1,000 Sofia and Yaccov Leon, J'lm.
NIS 600 Ellen and Helmut Sport, Schwelm, Germany.
NIS 500 Dvorah and Bezalel Portan, J'lm.
NIS 284 Anon., J'lm.
NIS 200 In honor of Jonathan Phatl-Raviv's Bar Mitzvah - the Slepkov and Bailick families.
NIS 150 In the names of my beloved grandchildren, Ronen, Noam, Daniel, Rebecca and Matthew - Sonia Jacobson, Tel Aviv.
NIS 100 Anon., Tzafon Yehuda.
NIS 36 In memory of Doris Moss - Rittie Katz, J'lm.
$500 In honor of the birthday of Debbie Tabacinic of Paris, France - Rohr family, Miami, FL.
$36 In loving memory of our dear mother and grandmother, Jean Bruch Feller (z"l) - Miriam and Howard Moses and family, S.I, NY.
$25 John Grossman, San Francisco, CA.

New Progress	Donations Totals
NIS 16,350	NIS 96,278.88
$561	$21,465.92

WELCOME HOME FUND

NIS 13,500 Proceeds of the Pessah Handicrafts Fair.
NIS 600 Ellen and Helmut Sport, Schwelm, Germany.
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WEATHER

Padres stay hot with 14th-inning win over Cubs

CHICAGO (AP) – Ken Caminiti hit a go-ahead single in the 14th inning Wednesday as San Diego kept up its hot start with a 3-2 victory over the Chicago Cubs, the Padres' fourth win in five games.

At 15-4, San Diego is off to its best start ever, topping the 1984 NL champions, who began 14-5.

With the score 2-all, Amaury Telemaco (0-1) walked Quilvio Veras in the 14th and Steve Finley singled in front of a diving Matt Mieske in left. Caminiti, who also drove in a run in the first, hit a looping single to center and Veras scored easily when Lance Johnson's throw was off the mark.

Expos 3, Cardinals 2

Mark Grudzielanek hit a game-tying homer off Mike Busby in the seventh and Rondell White singled with the bases loaded against Kent Bottenfield (1-1) in the ninth, stopping visiting St. Louis's four-game winning streak.

Mark McGwire went 1-for-4 for St. Louis, narrowly missing his 10th homer of the season when his fifth-inning drive hit the top of the left-field wall and dropped for a double.

Phillies 5, Reds 4

Tyler Green survived a rocky first inning and Doug Glanville homered off Gabe White (0-3) to break a 4-all tie in the fourth.

Green (2-1) allowed four runs and five hits in the first before blanking visiting Cincinnati on four hits over the next six innings.

Marlins 3, Rockies 2

Despite getting a rare well-pitched game, visiting Colorado lost when Derrek Lee hit a two-out, two-run double in the eighth. The Rockies, who have lost five of six and 13 of 16, held an opponent to fewer than four runs for just the fifth time this season and just the third time since April 1.

Jay Powell (1-2) allowed one hit in two scoreless innings for Florida, just 6-13.

Pirates 5, Giants 2

Host Pittsburgh stopped a seven-game losing streak, their longest since June 1993. Kevin Young, in a 5-for-32 slide, had three hits and Jose Silva struck out eight, walked none and allowed two unearned runs in six-plus innings.

Dodgers 9, Brewers 6

Mike Piazza hit a three-run homer off Bob Wickman (1-4) in the ninth, his second of the game and seventh this season, as visiting Los Angeles rallied from a 6-0 deficit and stopped Milwaukee's five-game winning streak.

Antonio Osuna (2-0) pitched 1⅓ scoreless innings and Scott Radinsky worked the ninth for his third save.

Braves 5, Diamondbacks 2

John Smoltz (2-0) had another strong outing in his second start of the season, beating Andy Benes as Michael Tucker and Javy Lopez homered for the victorious hosts.

Smoltz, who allowed one run and five hits in 5⅔ innings, led Atlanta to its seventh victory in eight games. The right-hander, who underwent arthroscopic elbow surgery in December, struck out four and walked two.

Mets 10, Astros 7

Pinch-hitter Jim Tatum hit a three-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth. Doug Henry (1-1) walked two in the ninth, and Tatum delivered his first pinch-hit in seven tries this season. Tatum's first homer came while batting for Dennis Cook (2-0).

Rich Becker hit a solo homer with two outs in the eighth off Henry that tied it at 7.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Twins 4, Athletics 2

Todd Walker's two-run double capped a three-run eighth as visiting Minnesota broke a six-game losing streak by rallying to beat the Oakland Athletics 4-2.

Trailing 2-1, the Twins tied it on a two-base throwing error by reliever T.J. Mathews (1-3) and a RBI single by Alex Ochoa.

With two outs and Billy Taylor on the mound, Walker hit a liner into the gap in right-center.

Red Sox 8, Tigers 5

Midre Cummings hit a two-run homer in the ninth as visiting Boston won for the 11th time in 12 games, overcoming a 4-1 deficit and Pedro Martinez's shortest outing in 17 starts since last July 24.

Martinez gave up four runs and six hits in 5⅓ innings, lifting his ERA from 0.84 to 1.68, and struck out seven. He had not allowed more than two runs in his previous four starts with Boston.

White Sox 14, Indians 7

Visiting Chicago scored nine runs in a bizarre fifth inning driven by grounders, choppers and rollers between first base and the pitcher's mound, and Cleveland made five errors.

Frank Thomas homered in the first after Ray Durham reached on an error for the first of three times – tying a major league record. Former Indians slugger Albert Belle contributed a two-run, ground-rule double during the fifth.

Yankees 9, Blue Jays 1

Visiting New York scored nine runs off Roger Clemens (2-2) to complete a three-game sweep. Scott Brosius, in a 4-for-29 slide coming in, matched a career-high with five RBIs.

Andy Pettitte (3-2) pitched a six-hitter for the Yankees, who have won 11 of 12.

Clemens (2-2) gave up nine runs for just the third time, the first since May 18, 1991, for Boston against Texas.

Rangers 7, Devil Rays 2

Mark McLemore's three-run double helped keep Rick Helling unbeaten and carried host Texas to its eighth victory in nine games.

Mariners 11, Royals 5

Rob Ducey went 4-for-5 with a career-high four RBIs, Joey Cora went 4-for-4 and Dan Wilson hit a three-run homer for host Seattle.

Ducey, starting his second straight game in right field after missing 17 games with an injured left knee, homered and singled three times.

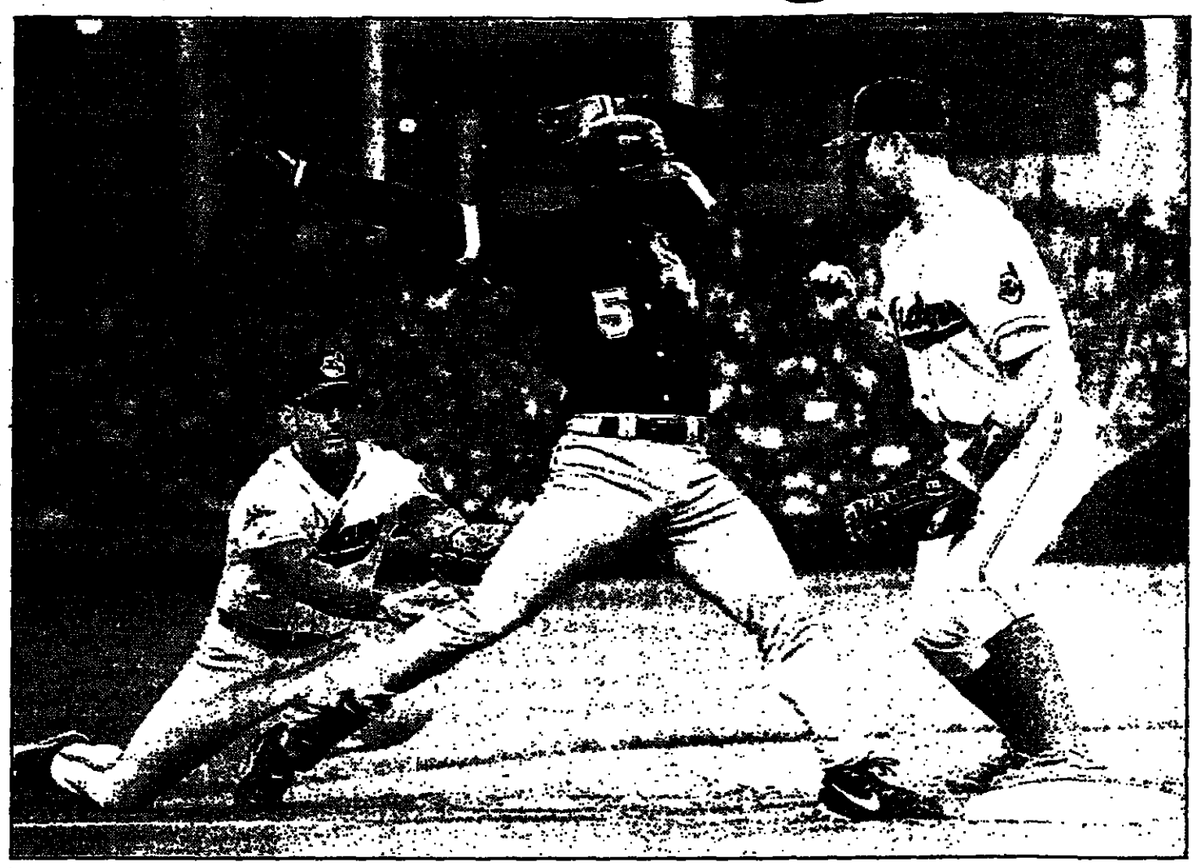
Angels 7, Orioles 6

Darin Erstad's two-run homer capped a three-run eighth inning that rallied Anaheim to a home win.

Gary DiSarcina tripled home the tying run in the eighth.

Mike Holtz pitched to one batter, retiring B.J. Surhoff on an inning-ending double play in the eighth. Troy Percival gave up a run in the ninth before getting his fourth save.

Cal Ripken went 3-for-5 with two RBIs for the Orioles.



HABIT FORMING – Chicago's Ray Durham (c) reaches first on an error as Cleveland pitcher Charles Nagy attempts to make the tag in first-inning action. Durham tied a major league record by reaching base three straight times on errors. (Reuters)

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Minnesota 010 000 030–4 7 0
Oakland 000 200 000–2 11 1
Milton, Trombley (6), Guardado (7), Aguilera (9) and Steinbach; Oquist, T.J.Mathews (5), Taylor (8), Groom (9) and Macfarlane. W–Guardado, 2-1. L–T.J.Mathews, 1-3. Sv–Aguilera (3).

New York 020 003 400–9 10 1
Toronto 000 000 100–1 6 2
Pettitte and Girardi; Clemens, Risley (7), Almanzar (9) and Fletcher. W–Pettitte, 3-2. L–Clemens, 2-2.

Boston 010 000 034–8 12 0
Detroit 011 002 010–5 9 1
P.Martinez, Lowe (6), Corsi (8), Gordon (9) and Varitek; J.Thompson, Florie (7), Brocail (8), Runyan (9), To.Jones (8), Duran (9) and Casanova, J.Oliver (9). W–Corsi, 1-0. L–To.Jones, 0-1. Sv–Gordon (5). HRs–Boston, Cummings (1). Detroit, Easley (5).

Chicago 291 000 200–14 16 0
Cleveland 001 021 030–7 11 5
Sirotka, T.Castillo (5) and Kreuter; Nagy, T.Martin (5), Morman (6) and S.Alomar, Borders (6). W–Sirotka, 3-1. L–Nagy, 2-1. HRs–Chicago, F.Thomas (4). Cleveland, M.Ramirez (6), Thome (3).

Tampa Bay 100 000 001–2 10 1
Texas 040 000 30x–7 12 0
Saunders, A.Lopez (7) and Flaherty; Helling, Gunderson (6), Crabtree (7), Bibles (9), D.Patterson (9) and J.Rodriguez. W–Helling, 4-0. L–Saunders, 1-2. HR–Texas, W.Clark (1).

Kansas City 200 300 000–5 8 1
Seattle 240 300 40x–11 17 0
Pichardo, Rosado (4), Rios (7), Whisenant (8) and M.Sweeney, Turner (8); Fassero, Timlin (6), Ayala (9) and D.Wilson. W–Fassero, 2-0. L–Pichardo, 0-2. HRs–Kansas City, Palmeiro (7), Mack (3), Halter (2). Seattle, Ducey (1), D.Wilson (1).

Baltimore 212 000 001–6 12 2
Anaheim 100 201 03x–7 12 1
Erickson, Rhodes (7), Te.Mathews (8), Orosco (8) and Webster; C.Finley, Robertson (7), DeLucia (7), Holtz (8), Percival (9) and Wallbeck. W–Holtz, 2-1. L–Te.Mathews, 0-1. Sv–Percival (4). HRs–Baltimore, Bordick (1). Anaheim, Erstad (5), Salmon (7).

NATIONAL LEAGUE

San Diego 200 000 000 000 01–3 9 0
Chicago 000 001 010 000 00–2 9 0
(14 innings)
J.Hamilton, Hitchcock (8), Miceli (9), Hoffman (11), Boehringer (13), C.Reyes (14) and G.Myers. C.Hernandez (13); Tapani, Pisciotta (8), Mulholland (9), Beck (10), T.Adams (11), Telemaco (14), VanRyn (14) and Servais, S.Martinez (13). W–Boehringer, 3-1. L–Telemaco, 0-1. Sv–C.Reyes (1).

Cincinnati 400 000 000–4 11 2
Philadelphia 031 100 00x–5 8 0
Hutton, G.White (3), Sullivan (6), Belinda (8) and Taubensee; T.Green, M.Leiter (8), Bottalico (9) and Lieberthal. W–T.Green, 2-1. L–G.White, 0-3. Sv–Bottalico (3). HR–Philadelphia, Glanville (2).

St. Louis 000 200 000–2 9 0
Montreal 001 000 101–3 12 1
Osborne, Busby (5), Bottenfield (9) and Marrero; C.Perez, Telford (8), Kline (8), Urbina (9) and Widger. W–Urbina, 1-0. L–Bottenfield, 1-1. HRs–St. Louis, Gant (4). Montreal, Grudzielanek (3).

San Francisco 000 000 200–2 7 1
Pittsburgh 100 102 01x–5 8 1
Darwin, Tavarez (5), S.Reed (7) and B.Johnson; Silva, M.Wilkins (7), Rincon (8), Loiselle (9) and Kendall. W–Silva, 2-2. L–Darwin, 1-2. Sv–Loiselle (5). HR–Pittsburgh, K.Young (3).

Colorado 000 020 000–2 5 0
Florida 000 001 02x–3 7 0
Thomson, DeJean (6), McElroy (7), Leskanic (8), B.M.Jones (9) and Manwaring; J.Sanchez, Alfonseca (6), J.Powell (8) and C.Johnson, Zaun (8). W–J.Powell, 1-2. L–Leskanic, 1-2. HR–Colorado, Lansing (1).

Los Angeles 000 150 003–9 11 1
Milwaukee 024 000 000–6 8 2
Park, Dreifort (5), Bruske (7), Guthrie (7), Osuna (7), Radinsky (9) and Piazza. Prince (9); Eldred, Woodard (6), Wickman (9) and Matheny. W–Osuna, 2-0. L–Wickman, 1-4. Sv–Radinsky (3). HRs–Los Angeles, Piazza 2 (7).

Arizona 000 001 001–2 7 0
Atlanta 020 100 11x–5 9 0
An.Benes, Brow (5) and Fabregas; Smoltz, Embree (6), Cather (7), Wohlers (9) and J.Lopez. W–Smoltz, 2-0. L–An.Benes, 2-2. HRs–Arizona, T.Lee (3). Atlanta, J.Lopez (4), Tucker (2).

Houston 000 120 310–7 10 0
New York 000 024 013–10 10 1
Halama, Scanlan (6), Nakowski (6), D.Henry (8) and Ausmus; Mlicki, Wendell (6), McMichael (7), Rojas (7), Cook (8) and A.Castillo. W–Cook, 2-0. L–D.Henry, 1-1. HRs–Houston, Da.Bell (4). Everett (1). New York, Tatum (1), Becker (3).

MAJOR LEAGUE LEADERS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BATTING–IRodriguez, Texas, .418; HMorris, Kansas City, .418; Meares, Minnesota, .409; McLemore, Texas, .397; Segui, Seattle, .392; TGoodwin, Texas, .379; MVaughn, Boston, .378.
RUNS–ARodriguez, Seattle, 21; McLemore, Texas, 19; Lawton, Minnesota, 18; Jeter, New York, 17; Griffey Jr, Seattle, 17; JnValentin, Boston, 16; Thome, Cleveland, 16; MVaughn, Boston, 16; Segui, Seattle, 16; Cora, Seattle, 16.
RBI–JuGonzalez, Texas, 23; Griffey Jr, Seattle, 23; TMartinez, New York, 21; Justice, Cleveland, 21; Garciaparra, Boston, 19; MRamirez, Cleveland, 19; MVaughn, Boston, 19; Stevens, Texas, 19; Palmer, Kansas City, 19.
HITS–ARodriguez, Seattle, 34; HMorris, Kansas City, 33; MVaughn, Boston, 31; Garciaparra, Boston, 30; McCracken, Tampa Bay, 30; Offerman, Kansas City, 29; Segui, Seattle, 29; Palmer, Kansas City, 29; JuGonzalez, Texas, 29; GHill, Seattle, 29.
HOME RUNS–ARodriguez, Seattle, 8; Griffey Jr, Seattle, 8; Salmon, Anaheim, 7; Palmer, Kansas City, 7; Canseco, Toronto, 7; Giles, Cleveland, 6; MRamirez, Cleveland, 6; MVaughn, Boston, 6; Stevens, Texas, 6; Segui, Seattle, 6.
STOLEN BASES–TGoodwin, Texas, 11; BLHunter, Detroit, 10; Jeter, New York, 7; McDonald, Oakland, 6; Durham, Chicago, 6; AGonzalez, Toronto, 6; Lofton, Cleveland, 6; Offerman, Kansas City, 6.
PITCHING (3 Decisions)–Bevil, Kansas City, 3-0, 1.000, 4.91; Helling, Texas, 4-0, 1.000, 1.91; Sele, Texas, 4-0, 1.000, 1.16; CFinley, Anaheim, 3-0, 1.000, 1.63; Saberhagen, Boston, 3-0, 1.000, 2.12; Sirotka, Chicago, 3-1, .750, 4.18; Erickson, Baltimore, 3-1, .750, 5.34; Alvarez, Tampa Bay, 3-1, .750, 3.00; Gordon, Boston, 3-1, .750, 2.31; KHill, Anaheim, 3-1, .750, 2.92.
STRIKEOUTS–PMartinez, Boston, 51; RJohnson, Seattle, 39; CFinley, Anaheim, 35; Mussina, Baltimore, 30; Moyer, Seattle, 29; Radke, Minnesota, 27; Pettitte, New York, 26.
SAVES–MJackson, Cleveland, 7; Gordon, Boston, 5; Percival, Anaheim, 4; ABenitez, Baltimore, 4; Ayala, Seattle, 4; Stanton, New York, 4; Wetteland, Texas, 4; JMontgomery, Kansas City, 4.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

BATTING–Bichette, Colorado, .413; ChJones, Atlanta, .395; Vina, Milwaukee, .390; DeBell, Houston, .390; DeShields, St. Louis, .385; Allensworth, Pittsburgh, .377; LWalker, Colorado, .377.
RUNS–Biggio, Houston, 22; ChJones, Atlanta, 20; Floyd, Florida, 19; WGreene, Cincinnati, 18; DeBell, Houston, 18; LWalker, Colorado, 18; Stynes, Cincinnati, 17; Bichette, Colorado, 17.
RBI–ChJones, Atlanta, 26; McGwire, St. Louis, 26; Castilla, Colorado, 24; DeBell, Houston, 21; DLee, Florida, 20; Piazza, Los Angeles, 20; Galarraga, Atlanta, 20.
HITS–Bichette, Colorado, 38; Vina, Milwaukee, 32; DeBell, Houston, 32; Lansing, Colorado, 31; ChJones, Atlanta, 30; BBoone, Cincinnati, 29; Biggio, Houston, 28.
HOME RUNS–ChJones, Atlanta, 9; McGwire, St. Louis, 9; Piazza, Los Angeles, 7; HRodriguez, Chicago, 7; Castilla, Colorado, 7; Burks, Colorado, 7; Galarraga, Atlanta, 7.
STOLEN BASES–Stynes, Cincinnati, 7; EcYoung, Los Angeles, 7; Biggio, Houston, 7; DeBell, Houston, 6; Bagwell, Houston, 6; McRae, New York, 6; DeShields, St. Louis, 5; Sosa, Chicago, 5; Bonds, San Francisco, 5; DWhite, Arizona, 5.
PITCHING (3 Decisions)–Millwood, Atlanta, 3-0, 1.000, 3.08; Wendell, New York, 3-0, 1.000, 6.75; Hampton, Houston, 4-0, 1.000, 3.00; Stottlemyre, St. Louis, 3-0, 1.000, 2.52; Tomko, Cincinnati, 3-1, .750, 2.76; Boehringer, San Diego, 3-1, .750, 7.15; Trachsel, Chicago, 3-1, .750, 3.37; Juden, Milwaukee, 3-1, .750, 2.57; Tapani, Chicago, 3-1, .750, 4.97; ALeiter, New York, 3-1, .750, 1.44.
STRIKEOUTS–Schilling, Philadelphia, 52; Millwood, Atlanta, 35; Stottlemyre, St. Louis, 34; RMartinez, Los Angeles, 29; KBrown, San Diego, 29; Hampton, Houston, 28; LHernandez, Florida, 26; Reynolds, Houston, 26; GMaddux, Atlanta, 26.
SAVES–Beck, Chicago, 7; Shaw, Cincinnati, 6; DJones, Milwaukee, 6; Loiselle, Pittsburgh, 5; Hoffman, San Diego, 5; Wohlers, Atlanta, 5; 6 are tied with 4.

National League

East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	8	7	.533	
New York	12	7	.632	1
Philadelphia	8	10	.444	4
Montreal	6	12	.333	6
Florida	6	13	.316	7
Central Division				
Milwaukee	12	6	.667	
St. Louis	13	7	.650	½
Chicago	12	8	.600	1½
Houston	11	10	.524	3
Cincinnati	9	11	.450	4½
Pittsburgh	8	12	.400	5½
West Division				
SanDiego	15	4	.789	
SanFrancisco	10	10	.500	5½
LosAngeles	9	10	.474	6
Colorado	7	11	.389	8
Arizona	6	13	.316	9

American League

East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
NewYork	12	5	.706	½
Boston	11	6	.647	1
Baltimore	12	8	.600	2
TampaBay	10	8	.556	3
Toronto	8	12	.400	6
Central Division				
Cleveland	12	7	.632	
KansasCity	9	12	.429	4
Minnesota	8	12	.400	4½
Chicago	7	13	.350	5½
Detroit	4	12	.250	7½
West Division				
Texas	13	5	.722	
Seattle	10	11	.476	4½
Anaheim	9	10	.474	4½
Oakland	6	13	.316	7½

Miracle men press their World Cup claims

By ALAN BALDWIN

LONDON (Reuters) – While England fans were discussing the merits of faith-healers in football, medicine's more conventional practitioners were the unsung heroes of World Cup warm-up matches this week.

Soccer, as any manager knows, is full of surprises but in the modern, hyper-fit and competitive game, the path to international success is rarely trodden by players who have endured brain surgery and major heart operations.

Yet on Wednesday, Scotland's Darren Jackson and Nigeria's Nwankwo Kanu both showed what can be achieved by a player determined enough to beat the odds.

Celtic forward Jackson had brain surgery last August, his life reportedly hanging in the balance. A five millimeter hole had to be drilled in his head to let fluid escape.

"The doctor didn't tell me my playing days were over, but I automatically assumed they were because the problem was with my brain," the player said late last year.

In Edinburgh, Jackson delivered Scotland's equalizer against Finland in a 1-1 draw. It was his first international goal since the operation and the close-range tap-in confirmed him to be back in the reckoning for a World Cup place.

Croatian midfielder Goran Vlaovic, who had been an inspiration when he came back from a similar problem two years ago to play in Euro'96, was also around on Wednesday as a substitute in a 4-1 thrashing of Poland.

Inter Milan forward Kanu, a key figure in Nigeria's 1996 Olympic gold medal side, meanwhile reached the latest milestone in his remarkable comeback story.

The 21-year-old was told by doctors in 1996 that his playing days were over but a specialist in the United States thought otherwise after surgery there.

Tests had revealed congenital heart disease after he joined Inter from Ajax Amsterdam and doctors warned that he could die if he carried on playing without an operation.

On Wednesday, he made his first full international start since the operation. He did not score but he did play the full 90 minutes against Germany.

"I'm so happy with the way Kanu played, enthused new Nigeria manager Bora Milutinovic after the 1-0 defeat.

"He showed so many things that he can do, an excellent disposition and discipline. I'm happy for the whole Kanu family that he has made it back to our team."

Alan Shearer's double for England in their 3-0 win over Portugal brought another long-term injured man back with a vengeance.

English newspapers in the past few days have been full of stories about faith-healers, mystic crystals and spoon-benders after manager Glenn Hoddle told reporters he had recruited a 57-year-old faith-healer to help the team.

Ironically, Shearer – who injured his ankle and only returned to action at the start of the year – was one of those reportedly less enthusiastic about the whole business.

"No Eileen Drewery needed last night at Wembley nor any divine inspiration, just the finishing power of Alan Shearer," declared the *Daily Mail* in its back page report.

Six months ago, Shearer was on crutches with some doubting whether he could regain his sharpness in time for the big challenge ahead in France this summer.

Brian McBride, a second half substitute and late entry to the US squad, scored his country's second goal against Austria in the 89th minute to further press his claims a year after breaking his right ankle.

There was plenty of hope also for some of those looking increasingly like watching France 98 on the television as well as for those still fighting to get fit.

England's Matt Le Tissier, who missed the start of the season with a broken arm, scored a hat-trick for the B team against Russia on Tuesday to put himself back into contention for the main squad.

Italy's Francesco Moriero meanwhile scored twice on his first international start against Paraguay.

That match was in Parma, where Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla was recovering from a groin injury.

Proving that the World Cup can be a powerful healer, he reported that he was confident of recovering in time for France after undergoing intensive treatment.

"The pain has gone," he told a Colombian radio station, reporting that he could turn and shoot without problems.

In Madrid, Atletico's Brazilian midfielder Juninho raised hopes of being back in action early next month after being sidelined for three months with a broken leg.

"Physically and mentally he is over the broken leg," his father Osvaldo Giroldo told reporters. "All he needs now is the formal clearance of club doctor Jose Maria Villalon."

Test of nerves for Beersheba, Hap. Tel Aviv

By ORI LEWIS

Hapoel Tel Aviv face a true test of character tomorrow when they take on relegation-threatened Hapoel Beersheba in the featured match of this weekend's National League soccer action.

The two sides, who might once have been allied through their Hapoel affiliation, will be going for broke tomorrow afternoon in Beersheba as the home side tries to gain a crucial win while their guests attempt to keep up the pressure on leaders Betar Jerusalem.

Beersheba will take great heart from the return of prodigy Yossi Benayoun, who, at the tender age of 17, has been hailed the Negev side's savior. They clearly missed him badly in the State Cup semi-final loss to Hapoel Jerusalem in midweek when he played with the national under-18 team in the 2-1 win in Spain in which Benayoun scored the winner.

Leaders Betar Jerusalem also face a relegation-threatened team when they take on Bnei Yehuda at Teddy Stadium tomorrow.

The Hatikva Quarter side will push Betar hard and Hapoel Tel Aviv will hope for a surprise, which appears unlikely according to the teams' current form.

In the third match of interest this weekend, Hapoel host Maccabi in the Haifa derby at Kiryat Eliezer.

This weekend's National League fixtures (all matches tomorrow unless stated):

Hapoel Kfar Sava v. Hapoel Ashkelon, Kfar Sava today 16:30; Hapoel Petah Tikva v. Maccabi Herzliya, Petah Tikva today 16:00; Hapoel Beersheba v. Hapoel Tel Aviv, Beersheba 17:15; Ironi Rishon v. Hapoel Jerusalem, Rishon 16:30; Hapoel Haifa v. Maccabi Haifa, Kiryat Eliezer 18:00; Betar Jerusalem v. Bnei Yehuda, Teddy Stadium 17:30; Maccabi Tel Aviv v. Hapoel Beit She'an, National Stadium 17:30; Ironi Ashdod v. Maccabi Petah Tikva, Ashdod 18:00.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bet. Jerusalem	27	17	9	1	64	29	60
Hap. Tel Aviv	27	16	5	6	56	23	53
Hap. Haifa	27	15	9	3	51	23	54
Mac. Haifa	27	13	7	7	43	30	46
Hap. PT	27	10	6	11	35	37	36
Mac. PT	27	7	12	8	24	26	33
Ironi Ashdod	27	8	9	10	35	43	33
Ironi Rishon	27	9	6	12	33	44	33
Hap. Kfar Sava	27	8	8	11	32	35	32
Hap. Jerusalem	27	7	10	10	31	37	31
Beit She'an	27	8	7	12	30	38	31
Mac. Tel Aviv	27	7	9	11	28	33	30
Mac. Herzliya	27	7	9	11	32	37	30
Bnei Yehuda	27	7	7	13	32	34	28
Hap. Beersheba	27	6	9	12	26	53	27
Hap. Ashkelon	27	5	6	16	28	45	21

Knicks braced to halt Hardaway

MIAMI (AP) – The smallest player on the court could have the biggest impact in the grudge match between the Miami Heat and New York Knicks.

The Knicks are determined to deter 6-foot point guard Tim Hardaway, and their success or failure may decide the winner of the first-round playoff series that begins today.

"The guy we have to worry about is Hardaway," New York center Charles Oakley said. "He's always the one that hurts us."

"Everyone has had problems with him," Knicks guard Charlie Ward said. "You have to try and do your best and hopefully he has an off night every night. But I doubt that's going to happen."

Because of bad blood between the Atlantic Division rivals, it's natural to assume that the best-of-5 series will be settled with muscle. Instead, it may hinge on Hardaway.

"I think he's the best point guard in the game," Heat coach Pat Riley said.

But he can be contained. Hardaway shot just 10-for-36 in two losses to the Knicks during the regular season. In two victories over New York, he was 18-for-37.

"Tim to us is like Michael Jordan to Chicago," Riley said.

"He's got to be productive. His efficiency against the Knicks is way down because they send three guys at him, pummel him and beat him up. They really do pressure him."

The Knicks settled on that strategy after last year's playoffs, when Hardaway averaged 23 points per game to help Miami eliminate New York. He capped the tumultuous series with 38 points in Game 7, including several 3-pointers launched beyond the range of any defense.

This year, the Knicks will do their best to keep Hardaway off balance.

"They'll bang you, knock you down, kick you and stomp on you," Riley said. "It's all part of the game in the playoffs. This is going to be like the playground – going to the hole, getting knocked down, getting up and making two free throws to make them mad at you some more. That's what I want to do."

For Miami, the challenge will be to contain guard Allan Houston, who averaged 24 points in four games against the Heat this season.

Houston and Hardaway are the most explosivethreats in a series that figures to be low-scoring.

"Miami's defense against us in the last game was five guys on Allan and daring everyone else to score," Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy said.

"He has to hurt them with the pass." "I don't mind that at all," Houston said. "If they're going to key on me, I still have to be aggressive and attack, and know that other people are open."

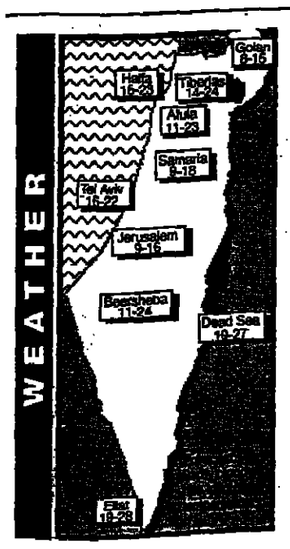
Riley would prefer a similar approach by Hardaway – hurting the Knicks with the pass when they send several defenders at him, and saving his shots for the stretch when they're needed most.

The Heat point guard has developed a reputation as one of the NBA's best fourth-quarter players.

"Tim has confidence you don't see in a lot of players," teammate P.J. Brown said. "He believes he's going to hit every shot he takes. We believe it too."

NBA Playoff Glance
FIRST ROUND
(Best-of-5)

Last night
Atlanta at Charlotte
Houston at Utah
San Antonio at Phoenix
Cleveland at Indiana
Today
New York at Miami
New Jersey at Chicago
Minnesota at Seattle
Portland at L.A. Lakers



AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW C	LOW F	HIGH C	HIGH F	
Amsterdam	10	50	21	70	clear
Beijing	07	45	22	72	rain
Berlin	07	45	18	64	clear
Boston	08	46	17	63	rain
Buenos Aires	16	59	23	73	rain
Cairo	17	63	28	82	clear
Chicago	04	39	17	63	clear
Copenhagen	08	43	14	57	cloudy
Frankfurt	07	45	20	68	clear
Geneva	07	45	22	72	pcloudy
Helsinki	04	39	13	55	rain
Hong Kong	27	81	29	84	cloudy
Jo'burg	08	46	23	73	clear
Lisbon	11	52	20	68	pcloudy
London	12	54	15	59	cloudy
Los Angeles	15	59	24	75	cloudy
Madrid	08	46	22	72	clear
Montreal	06	43	20	68	clear
Moscow	09	32	16	61	clear
New York	11	52	19	66	rain
Nice	13	55	19	66	pcloudy
Paris	14	57	16	61	clear
Prague	08	43	18	64	pcloudy
Rio de Janeiro	24	75	31	88	pcloudy
Rome	08	46	20	68	cloudy
San Francisco	13	55	21	70	rain
Stockholm	05	41	07	45	cloudy
Sydney	15	59	17	63	rain
Tokyo	20	68	28	79	cloudy
Toronto	02	36	18	64	clear
Vienna	06	43	19	66	clear
Warsaw	03	37	14	57	cloudy
Washington	09	48	18	64	cloudy
Zurich	06	43	21	70	pcloudy

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World No. 9 Robidoux bows out

SHEFFIELD (Reuters) – World No. 9 Alain Robidoux was beaten 10-8 by Matthew Stevens in the first round of the world snooker championship yesterday.

Always behind in the match, the French-Canadian moved to within a frame of Stevens on four occasions but was unable to draw level.

His Welsh opponent went on to record a winning debut at the Sheffield venue.

World No. 3 John Higgins trails Anthony Hamilton 6-2 overnight in the opening second round clash.

Englishman Hamilton won the final five frames of the session with breaks of 42, 88, 82 and 115 to leave the Scot with plenty of work to do when play resumes today.

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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Kinder beats AEK for EuroLeague title

BARCELONA – Kinder Bologna brought Italy its first European Final Four title in 10 years, defeating AEK Athens 58-44 in last night's championship game behind 14 points from Antoine Rigaudeau and 13 from Predrag "Sasha" Danilovic.

Benetton Treviso defeated Partizan Belgrade in the third-place game 96-89.

The pre-tournament favorites – matching Tracer Milan's 1988 title – used depth, stifling defense and experience to beat AEK, which got too little offense from its two American cornerstones – Willie Anderson and Victor Alexander.

Former San Antonio Spurs Anderson had only four – shut down on defense by Danilovic, just back from two seasons in the NBA with Miami and Dallas. Alexander, another former NBA player, added five and was out-played by Yugoslav counterpart Zoran Savic.

Jose Lasa led the losers with only seven points.

Kinder's man-to-man defense was suffocating, and its sure ballhandling gave AEK little option but to struggle with a dreary half-court game and try out slugging Kinder inside.

Kinder, which was up 28-20 at the half, seemed comfortable until AEK closed to within four with 3:27 to play. But a key field goal by Danilovic – following his own missed shot – and a 3-pointer with 1:29 left by Savic to make it 52-42 sealed the victory.

Kinder coach Ettore Messina jumped from the bench, clenched his fists and looked to the heavens. He knew it was all over.

The EuroLeague title is Kinder's first, and a first for the highly respected Messina, who brought a rebuilt Italy a silver medal in last summer's European national championships.

AEK was the fifth consecutive Greek team to reach the Final Four, but it failed to match the titles won in the last two seasons by Greek clubs Olympiakos and Panathinaikos.

More bad new for AEK coach Yiannis Ioannides. He failed for the sixth time in six tries to win this title. He had been to the Final Four previously and lost twice with Olympiakos and three times with Aris Salonika.

Benetton Treviso was led by American Henry Williams with 24 points and Stefano Rusconi scored 16 in the 96-89 win over Partizan. Partizan's top scorer was Predrag Drobnjak with 22 and Dejan Tomasevic with 20.

For Benetton coach Zelimir Obradovic, it was a third-place trophy to go with three championships and a fourth place.

Before the start of the final, police were called into action.

Twice as many officers were on duty following trouble two days ago and fans of AEK Athens, at the heart of Tuesday's worst incidents, were separated from the rest of the supporters in the 10,000 strong crowd.

But shortly before the end of the third place play-off police had to move in again.

The trouble started when objects appeared to be thrown at fans of Kinder Bologna.

Special wire barriers had been erected inside the Sant Jordi stadium to make the police task easier and, helmeted and with batons, they moved in to clear the troublemakers while some Italian fans sought safety on the other side of the arena.

Extra police took up positions in the stadium and the third place match was completed.

(AP, Reuters)



NO SURRENDER – AEK Athens's Vranislav Prenevic (left) goes for a layup as Kinder Bologna's Hugo Sconochini tries to block him during the EuroLeague final last night. (Reuters)

Eilat advances

By ELI GRONER

Better basketball doesn't always determine the outcome of deciding playoff games, but a bigger heart usually does.

A case in point is Hapoel Eilat, which outhustled, outmuscled and outplayed Rishon Lezion in Eilat last night to advance to the National Basketball League's Final Four for the second consecutive year.

Eilat 77, Rishon 62

Eilat proved that even on an off-night from Amir Katz (3 of 13 from three-point range), it had enough firepower to win its most important game of the year. Joe Dawson and Eddie Elisma tallied 18 points apiece and Meir Tapiro added 15, along with 10 rebounds, to pick up the slack and propel Eilat into the semi-finals.

Sheer determination on the southerners' part proved to be pivotal. Eilat outrebounded Rishon 34-25, amassing 14 offensive boards along the way. In addition, the victors shot a perfect 17-17 from the charity stripe.

"When this team plays well, the sky's the limit," said Coach Moshe Weinkranz. What should be of concern to Eilat's semifinal opponent, Maccabi Ra'anana, is that the southerners still haven't played to their potential in the postseason, and should only get better.

The other semifinal series will pit Maccabi Tel Aviv against Hapoel Jerusalem.

Both best-of-five series start on Sunday.

Red Wings down Coyotes in playoff opener

DETROIT (AP) – Detroit opened defense of its Stanley Cup championship in high gear Wednesday night as Joe Kocur scored two goals in the 6-3 win over the Phoenix Coyotes.

Detroit, hoping to become the first National Hockey League team in six years to repeat as Cup champion, scored three times in the first 13 minutes and blew it open with three more goals in the second period.

Nicklas Lidstrom, Kocur and Sergei Fedorov scored first-period goals for the Red Wings, who ended 42 years of frustration by capturing the Cup in 1997. Darren McCarty, Kocur and Kirk Maltby scored in the second as the Red Wings chased Nikolai Khabibulin, the goalie who caused them so much anguish two years ago.

Rick Tocchet scored in the first period and Cliff Ronning and Bob Corkum scored in the third for Phoenix.

Sabres 3, Flyers 2

Donald Audette's third-period goal, which came after visiting Buffalo squandered a two-goal lead, won it for the Sabres. Audette slapped in a rebound from the side of the net with 8:17 left to play.

Star goalie Dominik Hasek made 22 saves overall, but had one rough spot when the Flyers rallied from a 2-0 deficit to tie the game with goals 19 seconds apart earlier in the period.

Michal Grosek and Wayne Primeau also scored for Buffalo, while Rod Brind'Amour and Chris Gratton got Philadelphia's goals.

Audette got the winner after Flyers goalie Sean Burke flopped to stop a shot from the point. The rebound trickled to the side of the net, and Audette lifted the puck over the fallen goalie from a tough angle.

Capitals 3, Bruins 1

Olaf Kolzig made 27 saves, and Brian Bellows, Sergei Gonchar and Esa Tikkanen scored for host Washington.

With their leading scorer hobbled for half the game, Washington relied on their tenacious defense and goaltender Kolzig to mark a successful return to the playoffs.

The victory ran the Capitals' home unbeaten streak to 12 games, although playoff enthusiasm has yet to capture all of Washington: there were about 8,000 empty seats in the 20,000-seat MCI Center.

Senators 2, Devils 1 (OT)

Bruce Gardiner scored on a rebound at 5:48 of overtime and visiting Ottawa stunned New Jersey.

Even though the Senators split four games with the Devils, few expected the eighth seed in the Eastern Conference to come into New Jersey's building and take the opener in the best-of-7 series.

Alexei Yashin also scored and Damian Rhodes made 28 saves for the Senators, who will try to take a 2-0 lead here Friday night.

Doug Gilmour had forced the overtime by scoring with 3:24 left in regulation for the Devils, who had the best record in the East.

Janne Laukkanen stopped a pass around the board by Doug Bodger and Brodeur blocked his shot from the right point.

Gardiner got the rebound and flipped it over a diving Brodeur, who was under tremendous pressure in the third period and overtime as referee Paul Devorski called three straight penalties against New Jersey.

Stars 4, Sharks 1

Host Dallas lost top regular-season scorer Joe Nieuwendyk to a first-period knee injury, but recovered to take the opener of the Western Conference series.

San Jose had won four straight regular-season games in Dallas before Wednesday's defeat.

Nieuwendyk got the Stars' first goal only 2:22 into the game as Dallas scored twice in the opening three minutes. But with 4:02 left in the period, Nieuwendyk was knocked out of the game by San Jose defenseman Bryan Marchment's check. Nieuwendyk's condition will be further evaluated by team medical personnel on Thursday.

Juha Lind made it 2-0 only 37 seconds after Nieuwendyk's goal. Owen Nolan scored the Sharks' only goal at 12:40 of the first period.

Oilers 3, Avalanche 2

Bill Guerin, Dean McAmmond and Boris Mironov scored in a span of 3:49 late in the game, rallying Edmonton to an away victory.

The seventh-seeded Oilers overcame a 2-0 deficit in the final nine minutes of the game.

The No. 2 Avalanche, playing without captain Joe Sakic following his one-game suspension for a knee-on-knee hit on Detroit's Kris Draper last Saturday, built their lead on two goals from Peter Forsberg.

The Oilers' Curtis Joseph had 25 saves, and Patrick Roy had 31.

Guerin made it 2-1 on a power-play goal at 11:02. Barely a minute later, Janne Niinimaa sent the puck the length of the ice and Todd Marchant chased it into the right corner, passing to McAmmond, who beat Roy on a shot from just inside the left circle at 12:22.

NHL PLAYOFF GLANCE
first round
(Best-of-7)

Wednesday's results:
Washington 3, Boston 1 – Washington leads series 1-0
Detroit 6, Phoenix 3 – Detroit leads series 1-0
Ottawa 2, New Jersey 1 (OT) – Ottawa leads series 1-0
Buffalo 3, Philadelphia 2 – Buffalo leads series 1-0
Dallas 4, San Jose 1 – Dallas leads series 1-0
Edmonton 3, Colorado 2 – Edmonton leads series 1-0
Last night:
Montreal at Pittsburgh, Los Angeles at St. Louis
Today:
Boston at Washington, Phoenix at Detroit, Ottawa at New Jersey, Buffalo at Philadelphia, San Jose at Dallas, Edmonton at Colorado

Sampras jeopardizes return to No. 1 after being humbled by Santoro

MONTE CARLO (Reuters) – Pete Sampras jeopardised his chance of becoming world No. 1 again when he crashed out of the Monte Carlo Open yesterday – 24 hours after saying he could master clay-court tennis.

The American suffered a humiliating 6-1 6-1 thrid-round defeat by Frenchman Fabrice Santoro and will have to wait to see how Czech Petr Korda progresses to know whether he can claim the top spot back.

Korda, who beat Spaniard Albert Costa 5-7 6-4 6-4, must at least reach the final to take the top ranking from Chile's Marcelo Rios, who is not playing here because of injury.

Australian Open champion Korda now meets former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands in the quarter-finals.

Sampras' stunning defeat came after a first-round bye and a 6-4 7-5 second-round victory over Andre Agassi on Wednesday, his first-ever win here.

Until then, Sampras had lost the three matches he had played at Monte Carlo in recent years, but had been heartened by his first success here.

"I know deep inside that I can play on the stuff (clay)," he said after beating Agassi.

Santoro, who reached the semi-finals last year and beat Thomas Muster, Sergi Bruguera and Stefan Edberg in previous years here, won seven consecutive games in a sequence that gave him the first set and a 1-0 lead in the second.

"I played well at first but then he helped me beat him a lot," said Santoro, who is ranked 25th in the world.

Santoro, who beat the American three years ago in Rome, now faces compatriot Cedric Pioline.

While Sampras was going through a nightmare against Santoro, Korda was struggling against Costa, a losing finalist here two years ago.

Despite leading 5-0 in the first set, the Czech suddenly cracked and, like Sampras on center court, conceded seven consecutive games to lose the set.

He then picked himself up, winning the second set and fighting his way back from one break down in the third to win in just under two hours.

Earlier, French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten, seeded eighth, lost to Pioline 7-6 6-1 while Yevgeny Kafelnikov lost to Spain's Carlo Moya 6-2 6-3.

The defeats were hardly surprising though, as neither Brazil's Kuerten nor Russian Kafelnikov ever did well here while Pioline reached the final in 1993 and Moya the semifinals last year.

Krajicek will be one of very few serve-and-volley players left in the next round as he eased past Czech clay-court specialist Bohdan Ulihrach 6-4 6-0.

Boris Becker, a Monaco resident, now semi-retired, on reached the quarter-finals of only his fourth tournament of the season when he swept past 13th seed Mark Philippoussis of Australia 6-1 6-1 in 48 minutes.

Becker, three times a losing finalist here, had not reached the last eight of a tournament since Wimbledon last year.

He now faces a daunting opponent in Spain's Alberto Berasategui, the most consistent player on clay this season.

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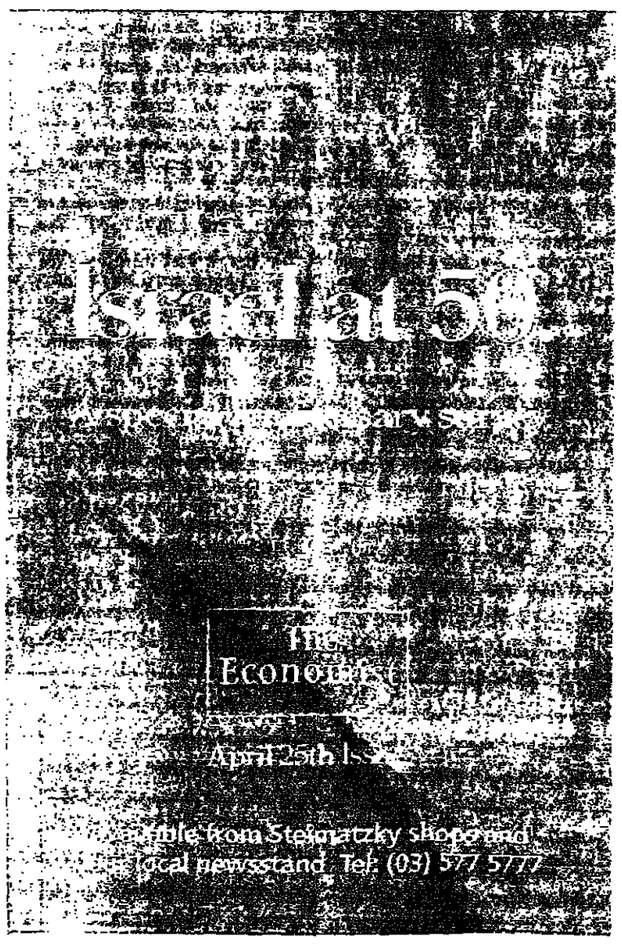
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